

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

## A CHARITY-RIDDEN PROFESSION.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—The gift of Lord and Lady Cowdray, of 20, Cavendish Square to the College of Nursing, Ltd., is indeed handsome, and no doubt it will be duly appreciated by its members, who are to be congratulated. The gift is singularly opportune at the present time of acute house famine. Without wishing in any way to depreciate such a gracious and generous act, and quite apart from it, I would like to remind myself and others that ours has become, to a considerable extent, a charity-ridden profession. We have been exploited for this purpose by means of quite a number of curious and ingenious begging schemes, to wit: Flag-selling in the streets to help "the poor nurses"; the *Daily Telegraph's* obtrusive appeal by means of harrowing stories of heroic nurses (were they all nurses?). Then, who can forget the "artistic design" of the advertisement of "The Nation's Fund for Nurses." The very plain woman insufficiently clad, crowning the kneeling figure of a wounded soldier with a capeline bandage. This decorated the walls of London for many months. The "poor nurses" could not get away from it, it smote them in the eye wherever they went. Then, burning with shame, we one day discovered a young society lady raffling a doll in aid of the poor beggars! Lastly, but worst of all—and we still smart when we think of it—"The Victory Ball" floated under cover of the sacred symbol of the Red Cross. That was "the most unkindest cut of all."

However well meant, such methods of obtaining money to help and improve the position of trained nurses, are essentially and fundamentally wrong. Charity of this sort is subversive of the spirit of honourable independence.

Don't let us forget either that he who pays the piper calls the tune, and those who control the purse will endeavour to govern us, *without our consent.*

There are still among us Nebuchadnezzars who set up golden images, which they invite us to fall down and worship; but—our long battle for emancipation has been fought under a noble standard, unmarred by any stain of commercialism or self-interest. The words of the poet Keats, which he applied to the Medical Profession, are equally applicable to our own: "*It is in its purity, too exalted for wealth either to nourish or debase.*" The only acceptable way to improve the condition of nurses is (a) pay them adequately, (b) shorten their hours, (c) give them reasonable time and opportunity for rest, recreation, education, which will foster in them the spirit of noble independence. If nurses were properly remunerated

they could and would subscribe to their own benevolent funds, as the doctors do, and as our American sisters do. Lastly, we are a State Registered profession now. A new era of real self-government has begun; let us show that we appreciate that tremendous fact, by insisting that all archaic methods of lay control and pauperising *must go.* What suited the good old Gamps of sixty years ago *will not suit us now,* will it? The Act stands primarily for raising the standard of nursing education, but correlatively it will, I doubt not, quicken and enlarge the moral consciousness, encouraging aspiration. Give us our head.

BEATRICE KENT.

London.

## NURSES AND THE EMPLOYMENT BILL.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I am disappointed that there is no indication in any of the nursing papers as to the decision arrived at by the General Nursing Council as to whether nurses are to be included in the Hours of Employment Bill. I do think that we have a right to this information, and therefore I have written to the Registrar to ask. Many of us are getting very discouraged about seeing no Register nor any visible advance in organising the *trained* nurses through the Act, established *nearly a year ago.*

It shakes one's confidence all the more to see the Council discussing our working day and apparently suppressing its decision.

I remain, yours faithfully,

M. E. NASH.

London.

[Nurses *are* included in the Hours of Employment Bill. The question is—*are they to remain there?* This is a question for the Nurses and not for the General Nursing Council to decide.—ED.]

## TO OUR CORRESPONDENTS.

We beg to thank Miss Lucie M. Havers and other correspondents for cuttings from local papers concerning short term training for district nurses.

Miss Mary Exton and others for letters on the Red Cross Campaign throughout the country, for handing over to V.A.D. nurses various branches of nursing in districts, and also for letters on the Hours of Employment Bill and the General Nursing Council.

All these questions we realise are of vital importance to the economic condition of trained and registered nurses, and we hope to deal with them in our next issue.

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

## QUESTIONS.

*November 6th.*—What complications would you watch for in nursing an aged patient with fracture of Femur? Describe the nursing of such complications.

*November 13th.*—What are the principal causes of rickets? How may they be combated?

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