

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.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE. NURSING BY THE CLOCK.

Miss Adelaide Murray.—"To nurse on private duty 'by the clock' would at once destroy all chance of harmony between the private nurse and the patient. The nurse would have to keep a little book which, presumably, would be presented to employer daily. Imagine the following entry: 'Extra duty 7 to 9 p.m. at 1s. 0½d. an hour, 2s. 1d. Patient helpless, needed feeding at dinner, watching for hæmorrhage; medicine due 8 p.m.; patient very restless.' How could any mother, or husband, or wife feel real respect for a nurse, or a nurse for herself, when brought constantly into touch with the sordid details of selling one's work at such a price? During the war I have heard myself described by society women posing as nurses, as 'the hired nurse.' I fear no amount of registration would wipe away the feeling upon the part of a patient that the relations with the nurse were exceedingly material, when every minute of service beyond the 56 hours suggested had to be calculated and accounted for. A colleague in satire suggests in making out the bill, 'Giving bedpan, 6d.; bottle, 3d.; filling hot-water bottle, 2d.; using feeder, 1d.' I suppose if we do not 'nurse by the clock' after the Hours of Employment Bill is passed we shall be hauled up and punished for 'being found on the premises with intent to commit a felony!'"

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN PRIVATE NURSING.

Member Nurses' Co-op.—"I was pleased to read of the judgment in the High Courts in the case of the Mental Nurses' Association v. Downie. It is only just. I belong to an association of Private Nurses worked on the Co-operative principle and I know dozens of cases where our business has been deprived of cases by members, who seem to have no qualms about resigning and remaining with patients supplied through our office. It appears to me most dishonourable and unprofessional, as it is the duty of every member to help support the Association for the benefit of fellow members as well as of herself. Now let us hope this selfish conduct will be stopped. There is another bad system in the private nursing world, in associations where professional ethics appear at a discount. The superintendent and nurses agree to charge a diversity of fees; so instead of having a printed schedule by which a patient knows what he will have to pay for various diseases, the nurse judges hastily from domestic appearances and advises what is to be charged. This, of course, opens the door to all sorts of extortion, and people are victimised."

[We agree with our correspondent that both methods are wrong, and as the former practice has of late become much more prevalent, no doubt co-operations of nurses will have to protect their business by adopting a clause, such as that on which the Mental Nurses' Association won the reversed judgment. It would be conducive to honest dealing also if private nurses' fees were standardised, as they are in Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere, through their national associations, which meet from time to time and agree what the fee is to be. Australia has just raised private duty fees to £4 4s. a week, owing to the increased cost of living, but there is very little domestic service provided, which makes the nurses' work very arduous.—ED.]

THE COLLEGE PLEDGE.

Sister, Met. Asy. Board.—"We feel we are being placed in a thoroughly false position by the College Council. What right has it to retain our State Registration Fee, unless we ask for it back again? Is this the sort of thing the General Nursing Council can deal with?"

[Not until the Rules are in force, but as the Disciplinary Body of the Nursing Profession it will no doubt in future establish a code of professional ethics.—ED.]

Poor Law Sister.—"I enclose you an admirable criticism of the College 'latest,' which appeared in this week's *Poor Law Officers' Journal*. Many nurses will not ask for their money back for fear of their future. The College Matrons ought to protest in a body—but perhaps they too are afraid of social influence. They appear to agree to anything."

THE NURSE PAYS.

Scottish Sister.—"I fear after all we are to have a male Registrar for Scotland, although good trained women applied. How behind the times we are!"

[Indeed, yes, if there is not a woman to be found in Scotland to fill this well-paid post. We fear the nurses on the Council have not supported the demand with sufficient tenacity, or surely they could have carried the principle that clerical officials of a woman's professional council, paid by women, should be women. We await further information on the appointment of Registrar, both in Scotland and Ireland; if men are appointed it will be the nurses' own fault. If private pressure failed, then rousing public meetings should have been held, resolutions passed in support of a Nurse Registrar, and the Government department responsible for the appointment should have been invited to receive a deputation in support of the demand.—ED.]

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

QUESTIONS.

July 31st.—What are some of the reasons for the shortage of nurses to-day?

August 7th.—What is Vincent's Angina, or "Trench Mouth," and how is it treated?

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