

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"The pace that kills" is the crawl.—*Lord Leverhulme.*

As a rule, the game of life is worth playing, but the struggle is the prize.—*Dean Inge.*

COMING EVENTS.

May 19th and 20th.—Royal British Nurses' Association. New Headquarters and Club open to Visitors from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and from 2 to 4 p.m.

May 31st.—Constructive Birth Control. A meeting convened by Dr. Marie Stopes. Chairman, Right Hon. G. H. Roberts, J.P., M.P. Queen's Hall, Langham Place, W. 8.30 p.m.

June 4th.—League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses. A General Meeting of the League will be held in the Clinical Theatre, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, on Saturday, June 4th, at 3 p.m.

At 3.45 the Meeting will resolve itself into a Social Gathering in the Great Hall, with music by members of the Nursing Staff, arranged by Miss Eyre. At 4.30, Mr. Allen Walker will give a short introductory lecture as a prelude to a series of six Lantern Lectures on "Old London and its Story," to be given in the Autumn.

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.

MENTAL NURSING.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MY DEAR EDITOR,—May I crave space in your valuable and highly-esteemed Journal to comment upon the wise words of Dr. Bedford Pierce at the Conference convened by the General Nursing Council of England and Wales, as reported in your issue last week. Dr. Bedford Pierce dwelt upon the present position of Mental Nursing and Mental Nurses in a convincing statement begotten of knowledge.

The One-Portal System, prescribed by the Medico-Psychological Association, and their scheme of training and examination, is of a very high order. (The writer speaks from experimental knowledge in Scottish mental hospitals.) Not only does the M.P.A. scheme include Mental Nursing in its many-sided aspects, but it also prescribes all the elementals of general nursing, so that it should not be difficult to establish a reciprocity of training, which would be advantageous alike to the general and mental trained nurse; and bring the different branches of our profession into line. Too long has mental nursing suffered through want of recognition! Why? It would

be difficult to say. The General Nursing Council will do a great work for thousands of workers in this, the most difficult branch of the profession, when they give mental nursing the status which is its due. Then we shall be rid of the present-day anomalies, in private and institution work, of "a round peg in a square hole," *i.e.*, someone trying to do the work for which they have had no training! No disparagement to those excellent women who do their best for the patient or patients; but, obviously, there can be no real "treatment" without knowledge! The mentally sick need more than being merely washed, fed, and made comfortable! We shall look forward to the General Nursing Council changing all this; and the anomaly too of those in charge of nerve and mental nursing homes and hospitals, who have no hallmark of efficiency, such as only the Certificate of the Medico-Psychological Association gives. We owe it to the public whose servants we are: do we not? No one *can* know the needs of a mental invalid, nor can any official, however kind and good, know the needs of a mental nurse, who has not done the "spade-work" in a mental training school.

With all the ever-increasing knowledge of to-day in psychological work, there is a fine field for the cultured and highly-trained woman, whose love and sympathy equals her skill. The present-day preventive and curative methods in mental science gives to mental nursing a fascination all its own. Trusting I have not trespassed too far on your valuable space.

I am,

Yours very truly,

A. E. MACDONALD (Sister).

St. Luke's Hospital,
London.

THE REGISTERED NURSES' UNIFORM.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I do not know if your invitation to suggestions for our future uniform is still open; in case it is, I venture to state an idea that seems to me, to a Queen's Nurse and to a Cottage Hospital Matron with whom I have discussed it, practical and desirable. Now that an increasing number of us are giving up corsets and other tight clothing, the useful and familiar apron is often seen at a disadvantage. The Babies of the Empire overalls escape this difficulty, and look very nice, but make washing a very expensive business.

Could we not combine greater convenience for washing, with comfort in wear, by having the uniform made in two parts—1, skirt with sleeveless and neckless top; 2, top with elbow sleeves, and detachable fore-sleeves and collar. The top might be either the same colour material as the rest of the dress, or of white or other contrast. Plainly made in one colour, we think it would not be noticed as different from any whole dress. Whatever style of dress is decided upon, may we hope to be delivered from the old stiff upright

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