

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.

VERDUN.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

THE BRITISH LEAGUE OF HELP FOR
THE DEVASTATED AREAS IN FRANCE.

DEAR MADAM,—With reference to your issue of January 8th, I beg to say that I shall be most grateful to you if you will convey to your contributor, "M. B." our appreciation of and best thanks for the charming article on Verdun.

It is one of the most delightful of the scores which have reached me from the Press Cutting people.

Your obedient servant,
DESMOND CHAPMAN HUSTON,
Colonel (Member of Central
Executive).

346, Strand, W.C.2.

EQUIVALENT STANDARDS AND FEES
IMPERATIVE IF EQUAL ECONOMIC PRIVILEGES
AND CONTROL ARE ACQUIRED.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—In commenting on our letter published in your issue of December 18th, you refer your readers to your reply to the Chairman of the General Nursing Council for Ireland. May I, therefore, emphasise the point made clear in his letter? Sir Edward Coey-Bigger states clearly that "in consequence of a direction given to them by the Irish Government on the advice of the Law Officers of the Crown under Sec. 3 (2) (c) of the Act, the Council are compelled to include in their Rules a saving clause empowering them to admit nurses who, even although they have not had a year's training, can prove to the satisfaction of the Council that they possess adequate knowledge and experience of the nursing of the sick."

It follows that neither the Irish Council nor Irish nurses are responsible for the present position. It is a question of legal interpretation purely. The wording of Sec. 3 (2) (c) is identical in the English and Irish Acts, and as regards the last sub-clause in the Scottish Act, so that possibly the English and Scottish Councils may need to assure themselves as to the validity of their own interpretation, if it is not possible to get the Irish legal interpretation overridden. The Irish Council, Sir Edward Coey-Bigger continues, "have laid down stringent standing orders regarding the manner in which such cases (*i.e.*, without actual hospital training) will be dealt with by the Registration Committee, so that in effect no nurse will be admitted who is not up to a high standard." Not every untrained "existing nurse" will apply for registration, and those who do apply will be

subject to stringent scrutiny, and the actual number who ultimately secure registration—if any at all—will certainly be very small. Moreover, this number will decline as years go by, for this provision applies only to existing nurses. It is a gross exaggeration to say, as you do, that "the admission of Cottage Nurses, V.A.D.'s and others is thus inevitable."

Yet because of this possible small and decreasing number who may get through the net, you propose to treat every Irish trained "existing nurse" and all future Irish trained nurses, not as comrade nurses from a neighbouring country, but as suspects whose credentials must be rigorously scrutinised as though they had never been registered by any body, and who must therefore pay the full additional fee. Your comments on the present-day value of the proposed fee are beside the point, since they apply to all fees (nor are they arithmetically accurate), but though money is an important consideration in these days to all working nurses, it is not the amount of the cross-registration fee that is at issue, so much as the principle involved. A reduced fee is an acknowledgment of professional fraternity; the full fee is an indication of suspicion.

I submit that the campaign which is being pursued by THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING is not helpful in securing uniformity of standard, and is calculated to promote disunity rather than unity among English and Irish Nurses.

May I add a word on the question of votes? If an English nurse wishes to work in Ireland only temporarily, she is not likely to use her vote for the Irish Council—she can only use it once in five years in any case—while if she settles in Ireland permanently, her vote for the English Council will be equally a "white elephant" to her. Why magnify molehills, and make forbidding mountains out of them?

I regret the length of this letter, but you will agree that the subject is important.

Yours faithfully,

MARIE MORTISHED,
Secretary, The Irish Nurses' Union.

29, South Anne Street, Dublin.

[We do not think we have much to add to our former criticisms on the points raised by the Chairman of the General Nursing Council for Ireland, and by Mrs. Mortished, Secretary of the Irish Nurses' Union, on the "transfer registration" question. Eminent Law Officers of the Crown are known to differ—just as doctors do—and we can assure our correspondent that the General Nursing Council for England and Wales has not framed the Rules for Registration without sound legal advice. It would appear that the Irish Council is satisfied under Sec. 3 (2) (c) that "nurses in attendance on the sick" "have adequate knowledge and experience of the nursing of the sick" without any hospital experience whatever. The English Council do not consider "conditions" can be "satisfactory" which do not include at least one year's practical

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