

Without such examination criticism must necessarily appear futile to those intimately acquainted with the subject.

If you think it worth while to answer this letter I would ask what alternative method you suggest for bringing nursing within the reach of the sick poor in districts too scattered for the visiting systems to be practicable?

Yours faithfully,

Tynewood, Ovingham,
Northumberland.

VICTORIA A. PERCY.

[We thank Lady Victoria Percy for her letter. Our complaint is that the Ministry of Health subsidises with public funds the resident nurse system in the cottages of the very poor and that the system is most unhygienic. It is the duty of a State Department of Health to provide effective and decent methods of nursing if public money is expended for the purpose. We have received many complaints from time to time from trained nurses compelled to be responsible for resident cottage nurses. It often means overcrowding and discomfort for the people, and lack of privacy and decency for the nurse. Perhaps some of our Public Health Nurse readers might suggest a better plan.—ED.]

MENTAL NURSES' HOURS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—The Report of the Committee on the Administration of Public Mental Hospitals has caused considerable discussion in the Press, and some resentment. In particular, their expression of opinion that the balance of evidence is strongly against the 48-hour week being beneficial to patients and nurses is felt by all experienced mental nurses with whom I have come into contact to be contrary to fact. As the Committee only examined one male and one female nurse the "balance of evidence," wherever it came from, would not appear to be of much consequence.

At a recent meeting of representative mental nurses in Lancashire, attended by ten members whose service averaged 23 years per head, the view was expressed that the 96 hours per fortnight, which has been worked in Lancashire for over two years, has been a source of inestimable benefit both to patients and staff. The accumulated experience of 23 years of mental nursing is not to be neglected, nor can it be suggested that members of the staff with that amount of service have no concern for the welfare of patients. Some of the delegates were most emphatic in stating that there had been a greater number of discharges during the last two years than in any similar period before.

The Committee's suggestion that distinction should be made between the two functions of a mental nurse—*i.e.*, nursing proper and social duties—is ludicrous. Playing marbles with maniacs might be a pleasant pastime for a member of the Board of Control, but to suggest, as they do suggest, that there is a considerable amount of time spent in playing cricket, billiards, or football

is merely misleading the public as to the nature of a mental nurse's duties.

What is essential is that the hours should be limited to a reasonable number—and 48 hours per week in attendance on the insane is extremely reasonable—and that the nurses should always be on duty. The prime necessity in mental nursing is that nurses should always be held responsible for their charges. So long as this is the case there can be no distinction, whatever the changing nature of their duties may be; but if such ceases to be the case, then woe betide the patients!

Yours, &c.,

GEO. GIBSON,
General Secretary National Asylum
Workers' Union.

1, Rushford Avenue, Levenshulme,
Manchester.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

AN INVITATION TO TIRED NURSES.

An Old Brightonian writes *re* "Peacehaven":—"What an invitation to tired nurses from our towns and cities. This new hamlet on the Sussex Downs will, I am sure, be a great benefit to tired workers. Already I hear there is an hotel there, and cottages or bungalows are springing up near to the sea at a safe distance from the turmoil of shopping and city life, yet near enough to Brighton to go in for a theatre or a shopping expedition. Think, too, of Sunday in summer time and a lovely walk through the cornfields to Rottingdean or Owendean Church. In this delightful spot the sun pours its rays through the clouds of all kinds of weather, as it does at Brighton—queen of watering places. I sincerely believe that the founder of "Peacehaven" will be classed with our path finders of the world's health resorts."

NOTICE.

In supplying notices of appointments the Editor will be obliged if correspondents will state if they are "Registered Nurses," as this legal professional title should now be notified.

WHERE TO REGISTER.

Apply for Application Form to the Registrar:—
ENGLAND AND WALES—12, York Gate, Regent's
Park, London, N.W.

SCOTLAND—13, Melville Street, Edinburgh.

IRELAND—33, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

Forms should be carefully filled in and the names given for references from persons who have agreed to supply them.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTIONS.

September 23rd.—What do you understand by *arterial tension*? Explain "high and low" blood pressure—with brief description of symptoms, cause and treatment of both.

September 30th.—What is the difference between "rheumatoid arthritis," "neuritis," and "rheumatism"?

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