

## 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 NURSES AND REGISTRATION.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Honest criticism is stimulating and helpful, but one can scarcely say the criticism in this week's Journal of the Report of the Mental Nursing Committee of the General Nursing Council is based on accurate knowledge. May I say here, *en passant*, our Committee has done, and is doing, yeoman service, and its latest recommendation of circular letters *re* Registration to the mental hospitals is only one of many instances of its vitality. It is inaccurate, to put it mildly, to say we have taken no part in obtaining State Registration—both financially and otherwise. Those of us who *really* know the excellent work of the Asylum Workers' Association for many years emphatically refute your assertion. We still have our idealists and pioneers who are enthusiastically carrying on that work without flair and with good results. The Mental Nursing Branch is vital and therefore stands for self-government along constitutional lines. The Act of Parliament now functioned by the General Nursing Council is the most powerful lever of the Profession; guiding without interfering, and helping without dictating.

I should like to assure the Editor the Mental Nursing Committee's Report more than justifies the confidence of the electors in its representatives on the General Nursing Council.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours very truly,

A. E. MACDONALD,  
(Sister).

194, Queen's Gate,  
London, S.W.7.

[We advise our readers to study our remarks on the Mental Nursing Committee's Report, which appeared in our issue (June 2nd) on page 349. We never make inaccurate statements. During the thirty-five years' struggle for State Registration, which we inaugurated in 1887, we acted in an official capacity throughout, and drafted the first Nurses' Registration Bill introduced into the House of Commons in 1904, the principles of which were incorporated in the Nurses' Registration Acts of 1919. Throughout that long period we urged the State Registration of Mental Nurses, but, with the exception of Miss Lord of Banstead, and subscriptions from time to time from Mr. M. C. Walshe, J.P., and a few individual nurses, we repeat Mental Nurses, *through their organization*, took no part in supporting, working for, or paying for the propaganda which the general nurses' organizations financed—£20,000 in hard cash, and another £20,000 in voluntary labour. The Asylum Workers' Association—excellent as far as it went—did not go far enough, as it

was largely controlled by Medical Superintendents, and not by the rank and file of the working nurses.

When invited to co-operate with the other nurses' organizations—mostly self-governing—which formed, with the British Medical Association, the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses in 1910, the Asylum Workers' Association did not accept the invitation, and thus did not unite with the General Nurses, or contribute to the dues enabling it to place the Nursing Acts on the Statute Book, thanks to Major Barnett, Dr. Addison, and the late Sir Robert Morant. We repeat that thousands of Mental Nurses know nothing of the Registration Movement, which is proved by the fact that in two years only about 1,500 out of at least 40,000 have been registered so far.

The authorities of Mental Hospitals have not in the past encouraged their nursing staffs to read THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING—the professionally edited Registration organ for 35 years—but publications which have misrepresented and bitterly opposed the movement for legal status and prescribed education for nurses, organized under State Authority. The result of this misdirection by the lay proprietors and editors of the anti-Registration press is now apparent.

The Mental Nurses' representatives on the General Nursing Council stood for election as Independent Candidates, and can therefore act and vote independently of any outside caucus, and we are glad to know they have proved they possess the will and courage to do so.

It is high time Mental Nurses who do not care to join the National Asylum Workers' Union (a Trade Union) organised a *self-governing* Mental Nurses' Association.—ED.]

## 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.

IRISH FREE STATE—33, St. Stephen's Green,  
Dublin.

NORTHERN IRELAND—118, Great Victoria Street,  
Belfast.

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

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTIONS.

June 23rd.—Describe the method of administering pituitrin, and any case in which you have seen it prescribed.

June 30th.—What points require to be observed as a routine by a nurse in all patients in regard to the following :—(a) Urine, (b) Stools, (c) Appetite, (d) Sleep, (e) Condition of mouth ?

July 7th.—Describe briefly how you would prepare the following baths, namely :—Alkaline, saline, mustard, starch, sulphur.

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