

"a stertorous sleeper snoring him to hate and despair," and who find their own sleep "full of dreams and misgivings, broken with brutal and sordid voices and sounds." In a nursing home, too, unless one is a "special," one cannot enjoy the satisfaction of giving the patients the care they need.

In the country, during the summer months, the ever-varied miracle of dawn and sunrise, with their poignant beauty of scents, sights and sounds, brings æsthetic delight and spiritual uplift. In winter, full moon on snowy landscape, or star-filled sky softly lighting and beautifying the umbrous night, offer sweet compensation for the loss of the noontide hours.

Amongst the drawbacks of night duty may be mentioned: Irregular meals, resulting in indigestion and constipation. Difficulty in sleeping by day because of noise. Failing vitality and consequent sense of illness between 2 and 3 a.m. Increased eyestrain. It is unfair to both patient and nurse to ask the latter to obtain part of her sleep on night duty.

### OUTSIDE THE GATES.

The International Council of Women have issued a leaflet entitled "A Call to the Women of the World," inviting societies of women internationally organised to take part in the Conference on the Prevention of the Causes of War, to be held in London next March. The *raison d'être* of the Conference is the necessity of awakening the rank-and-file of women everywhere to a sense of their responsibility and to a realisation of their power in regard to the removal of the causes of War through the creation of new ideals in connection with all international relations.

### COMING EVENTS.

October 18th.—Memorial to Dr. Elsie Inglis. Laying of foundation stone of "The Hospice," Edinburgh, by Viscountess Novar. 2 p.m.

October 20th.—Memorial Service for Miss Amy Hughes. St. Thomas's Hospital. 2 p.m.

October 20th.—Urgency Cases Hospital. Fifth Annual Dinner. Gatti's Restaurant, Strand, London. 6.30 for 7 o'clock.

October 20th.—Professional Union of Trained Nurses. Handicrafts Guild Exhibition. "The Challenge" Book and Picture Stores. 24, Great Russell Street, W.C. 3 to 6 p.m.

October 22nd.—Bazaar at the Mansion House, E.C. in connection with "Fleet Street Week for St. Bartholomew's Hospital." Patroness: The Queen. Opened by the Lady Mayoress.

October 24th.—Royal British Nurses' Association Lecture: "The Mental Attitude in Private Nursing." By Miss A. E. Macdonald, R.M.N.

October 27th.—Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland. Meeting, 194, Queen's Gate, S.W. 3 p.m. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, S.R.N., will speak on "The International Moral Sense." Tea.

November 9th.—Meeting Grand Council, National Council of Trained Nurses, 431, Oxford Street, London, W. Tea 4. Meeting 4.30 p.m.

### 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.*

#### "NOT A MAN BUT A FLAME."

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—One does not like generalities; they are never fair, but I assert confidently that there are many Nurses of this year of Grace who do not appear to possess the same ethical standard that inspired their sisters of a quarter of a century or more ago. Nurses of that day were taught that those who entered the portals of a hospital must be prepared for a life of discipline and self-sacrifice; moreover, that the consideration of duty must come before pleasure. Duty to the patients, duty to fellow Nurses, and the maintenance of a high professional standard—*esprit de corps*. At that time there was no smoking among Nurses, no betting, no popular slang. Skirts were worn modestly down to the ankles, stockings were not transparent, heels were low. The demeanour was different, the "style" was different; and yet, although conditions were worse than in the present day, Nurses seemed happier.

Was there not more thoughtfulness for others in those good old days? Was there not a more vivid imagination apparent—that beautiful gift, the fruit of selflessness? Was there not a strong moral influence felt in the Ward, radiating from women who regarded nursing the sick as the highest calling for women, and one requiring the highest and best qualities of brain and heart?

And were there not among them women with a vision, women who saw the effects alike upon patients and Nurses of stultifying disabilities, and who, imbued with a passionate desire to raise this, the highest calling of women, from the unrecognised and obscure position in which it then was, set to work with unselfish devotion, and laboured unceasingly for many years, against tremendous opposition from those who should have been their strongest allies?

The joyful fruition of these hopes was followed almost immediately by a tragic drama of selfishness and self-interest almost unbelievable, which has rendered almost null and void the laborious work of years. The story is so well known. The magnificent instrument, the Nurses' Registration Act, made to benefit mankind, has been converted into one for destruction of ideals, and of unpardonable self-interest. The iconoclasts have even dared to break the law, by *violating the Act itself* on more than one occasion, the Act—let it be remembered—which is not permissive, but *imperative*—the law says *shall not may*. This poor lifeless Act, which is now nothing better than a plaything in the hands of the majority on the G.N.C., is of no value, no protection, and

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