

## 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.*

## A QUESTION OF FINANCE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM EDITOR,—You invite suggestions about THE BRITISH JOURNAL.

May I say that it seems to me of the utmost importance that this publication should again become a weekly one. As the organ of the British College of Nurses and the only professionally edited paper, it is essential that it should appear not less often than the other nursing papers.

It has been, and is the most valuable means of upholding the truth and the highest ideals of the profession, and the British College will do well to do all in its power to get it very widely known.

Yours faithfully,

E. L. C. EDEN.

The Grange,  
Kingston, Taunton.

## A STATE REGISTERED PROFESSION—WHAT ARE ITS USES?

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—I should feel grateful if you would accord me the courtesy of space in your columns for this letter.

An Act for the State Registration of Trained Nurses was placed on the Statute Book in December, 1919. It was an historic event, because it marked the final victory, after a strenuous campaign against strong opposition for 30 years.

The prolongation of the conflict is, in itself, conclusive evidence of the importance of the reform for which we contended.

The two-fold purpose was:—(a) To safeguard the Sick Public by providing for a guarantee of efficiency, through a higher standard of professional education, with State Examination, for those calling themselves, and practising as Trained Nurses. (b) To safeguard Trained Nurses themselves from unfair competition.

The Act is a permissive one, but trained women were quick to perceive the value of it, and the names of many thousands are now on the Register. It was reasonable to hope and believe that Sanitary Authorities, and others dealing with matters affecting Public Health, would have had a little perception, but in this we have been disappointed (of course there are notable exceptions). It scarcely seems possible that there can be—after seven years—any Medical Officers of Health, or others, who do not know that trained nursing is now a State Registered Profession, with its significance and importance, and yet there are some at least, who by their negative action, ignore the important fact, overlooking these most useful Public Health Servants, employing in preference those with lower qualifications for work requiring the highest. I speak from personal experience. The reason is probably to be found in the fact, that in the minds of many people, the spirit of *Sairey Gamp* still dwells in the modern nurse, who is therefore best avoided. To illustrate my point, I was recently present at a meeting during "Health Week" in a certain Metropolitan Borough, when addresses were being given on health subjects. One item on the agenda was, "The care of the patients at home" (Tuberculosis). The address was given by a lady (who was not a nurse) who—while doing useful work in other respects—had no knowledge or experience of this highly technical subject; while among the audience sat the Superintendent of the local

District Nursing Association, wearing the dignified State Registered uniform, whose thorough knowledge and wide experience, made her pre-eminently suitable to give the address.

Another example of how State Registered Nurses are *not* required to give instruction in the art of nursing, is the following:—I have before me the Syllabus of Lectures to be given during the winter in a certain "Women's Evening Institute." Among the subjects I read "Home Nursing" (Advanced), Ditto (Elementary). Surely a trained District Nurse is the only suitable person to give such address, seeing that she is nursing every day in the homes of the poor. Instead, two doctors are to lecture on this subject!

To treat the members of a State Registered Profession—which is the invaluable Aid-Society to the State Registered Profession of Medicine, and of indispensable importance to the community, so slightly is, to say the least ungrateful, and to say the most, insulting. The Act—as I have explained—was passed for the benefit of the community, and the community show it the cold shoulder.

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Ex-Borough Councillor.*

## INJURY TO MORAL STATUS.

[We have received several comments in support of Miss Beatrice Kent's letter, headed "Injury to Moral Status," which appeared in our October issue. Miss Kent has placed the matter before the Council of the British College of Nurses—inviting enquiry into, and action on the case, and a Member of the Matrons' Council has done likewise, and as both organisations have the matter under consideration further comment is not necessary at the moment.—ED.]

## KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

ASK THE REGISTRAR.

*C.A.D. asks.*—"Can you tell me why THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, the only journal which supported State Registration of Nurses, is excluded from the Waiting Room at G.N.C. Headquarters in Portland Place, whilst lay edited Nurses' Papers are placed prominently on the table?"

[Ask the Registrar.—ED.]

UNDUE INFLUENCE.

*H.H.R. writes.*—"Recently I attended a meeting in a hospital of some repute where probationers were urged by a representative of the College of Nursing, Ltd., to join that body 'as it was the only society able to do anything for them professionally.' Great and exaggerated stress was laid upon its educational advantages. No mention was made of the British College, and the probationers were given no opportunity to make a sound decision because the full facts concerning educational and economic conditions were not placed before them. Is this justice to the nurse in training? Is she to be allowed to suppose that there is but one College, and that that College is almighty?"

[We strongly disapprove of undue influence being used in public hospitals where probationers are concerned. They are not free agents, as their service may be terminated at any time, and where, as in the hospital mentioned, the greatest pressure has in the past been used to compel the Nursing Staff to join the College of Nursing, Ltd., it is nothing short of undue influence upon the part of the higher officials, and the Committee (if they know of it), that during training young probationers should be compelled (for it amounts to compulsion) to join any organisation. When trained, examined, and registered, then it is the duty of Registered Nurses to enquire into professional organisations, and to choose for themselves which they wish to support.—ED.]

## PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR DECEMBER.

In what diseases may vomiting of blood occur? State what you would do in each case pending the arrival of a medical practitioner?

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