

## 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.*

## CIVIL NURSING MONOPOLISED BY V.A.D.S.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Having a wide circle of acquaintances and friends at home and in the Dominions, I did all in my power to push and make popular the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley—and naturally concluded that the nursing would be placed in the hands of thoroughly trained nurses, imagine my surprise to find that it was almost entirely done by V.A.D.s, thus we Registered Nurses were deprived of a splendid opportunity of Empire service.

To quote from the official organ of the British Red Cross:—“Our members have been on duty for the whole period during which the Exhibition was open, and 23,388 cases received first aid during the summer of 1924 and 16,134 during the summer of 1925, making a grand total of 39,522; of these, 594 were serious cases.

“The work at the Exhibition has been an important milestone in the history of the Society, this being the first occasion on which the Order and the Society have jointly undertaken civil work on a very large scale; every county in England, Scotland and Wales has had an opportunity of participating.

“The members have much enjoyed the chance of discussing V.A.D. work with members from other parts of the country, and from this point of view alone the work has undoubtedly been of great value. The thanks of the Society are due to the members themselves for the magnificent way in which they have come forward to assist in the work.”

Now I maintain that the nursing of persons, especially in the 594 serious cases, should have been an Imperial milestone in the history of trained nursing, and not made the occasion of “civil work” being handed over to V.A.D.s, presumably organised for service in time of war, in connection with a military organisation, as the Red Cross Society is. We trained nurses of the Empire would doubtless “have much enjoyed the chance of discussing” our professional work with our colleagues upon such an unique occasion. But no, social influence deprived us of that right. Is it any wonder that “hewers of wood and drawers of water” are lamentably short in the civil hospitals?

MATRON, S.R.N.

[As a member of the Women's Committee of the Exhibition, we asked that our protest should be placed on record on the Minutes, when we were informed that V.A.D.s and not trained nurses were to be placed in almost complete charge of sick persons at the Exhibition. We were further told that the Women's Committee had nothing whatever to do with the nursing arrangements. We entirely sympathise with our correspondent's views, and have reluctantly come to the conclusion that women of social influence are not interested in nursing education, or nursing efficiency, or they would not take a back seat in hospital management every time.—ED.]

## THE PRECIOUS GIFT OF EYESIGHT.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I read with pleasure the notice in the last issue of the JOURNAL in regard to the danger of using frames for goggles made of inflammable celluloid. It ought to be

made known far and wide, for, surely, no one who realised what is implied if such material ignites would risk the precious gift of eyesight by using it. Imagine one moment having the capacity for seeing all the lovely things and places in the earth, and the next, a flare, a darkness, a darkness that may be felt for the rest of one's life.

If purchasers of goggles are so careless or so ignorant as to risk their eyesight from this cause, then why not work for the enactment of a law which would make the use of imitation tortoiseshell in the form of celluloid illegal? The law should protect the public from this menace, and equally from that of cheap inflammable flannelette.

Faithfully yours,

CERTIFIED MIDWIFE.

## KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

## Private Nursing.

R.N.S. writes:—“As a private nurse of many years standing I of course read your editorial last month on my branch of work with special interest. All you write is quite true; but the truth is one is such a bird of passage it is very difficult to concentrate on professional duty so far as organisation is concerned. One thing is certain that people with limited incomes can no longer employ private nurses for any length of time, and the strain of attending so many dying people is a very real one. I do quite agree that we ought to take steps to meet the needs of that large section of the public whose incomes are moderate, and yet it is difficult to see how it is to be done. The lowering of fees unless one was constantly engaged would mean inability to help one's own people, greatly impoverished since the war, and no chance of saving for old age. Could not the middle classes help themselves by some form of sickness insurance?”

Superintendent writes:—“This is a thriftless age, and many private nurses are not a bit better off for taking £4 4s. instead of £2 2s. a week. Money just slips through their fingers, and the waste of money on expensive and often unsuitable clothes is a growing evil. I urge the starting of a banking account—to see it mount up and then the satisfaction of investing savings becomes a useful habit. The first time I invested £100 I felt like Cræsus, and when I got a dividend a Rothschild wasn't in it. May I urge every private nurse to invest at least a part of her fees. It makes the future look so much brighter.”

A Patient says:—“I read my nurse's B.J.N. (as she calls it) every month. If private nurses only all realised what blessings they can be in private houses, they would more carefully prepare themselves for their great responsibilities. I do so agree with you about voices and polished manners. How often a really well-meaning woman fails with cultivated patients just because she lacks charm. I have been ministered to by many nurses and have observed a lack of finish in their work. Some are untidy, others clatter, some gossip. Now I have a real ‘gem’ and hope she will put up with me for some time to come.”

## The Fleming Cookery Book.

Miss Mackenzie, Matron, Hospital for Sick Children, Newcastle, writes:—“I am sure you will be pleased to know what a good sale there has been of the ‘Fleming Hospital Cookery Book.’

“The first purchaser through the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, was the daughter of the architect of the ‘Fleming Hospital,’ who is a Matron.

I still have some copies to dispose of. Price 2s. 6d.”

## PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR MAY.

What do you know of poliomyelitis, and the chief points in its nursing care?

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)