

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.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERESTING DISCUSSION.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I have followed with great interest the Interim Conference of the International Council of Nurses at Geneva.

With the exception of one remark, I think the papers and the discussions following were of extraordinary interest, and show how very much care and thought has been given to their preparation.

The remark I refer to and its endorsement were both made by English representatives and I am quite sure my exception will be taken by many others who have not time or wish to be controversial.

The Sister Tutor at the General Hospital, Birmingham, remarked that the menial work required to be done by a nurse was a great relief from the mental strain entailed by nursing duties. This remark was endorsed by the Sister Tutor of King's College Hospital, London.

I have had two general trainings and, in both, the higher I mounted the ladder of nursing, the less menial work I had to do until ultimately I had none.

I think my experience is general, so if the menial work is a relaxation Heaven help the trained nurse, for she has no relaxation. Does a man, for relaxation, after a heavy morning's work, clean his boots, or brush his clothes? If he has either to do he does it before leaving home.

Does a private nurse in a well-run house wash the dishes or sweep the floor. She may do it and most efficiently, if necessary, but it won't add to the well-being of the patient.

Menial work and nursing do NOT go well hand in hand. To begin with, it lessens the respect of the average patient for the probationer.

It fills the probationer with disgust. It is galling to the more sensitive highly-bred girl, and while the hospitals continue to expect it from the prospective probationers they will continue to deplore the absence of the better class girl in the nursing world.

I remain, yours faithfully,
MARGARET ROBERTSON,
F.B.C.N., C.M., S.R.N.

78, Clapham Road, Bedford.

[This strong expression of opinion should open up an interesting discussion. The Editor has always held every form of labour in respect, and has enjoyed, in and out of hospital, what is termed menial work. But is there such a thing, and who are now menials?—ED.]

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

DELAY MEANS TRAGEDY.

"D.B." c.o. Commonwealth Bank of Australia.—A Fellow of the British College of Nurses writes:—

"Whilst waiting for the establishment of registration reciprocity in this State, I and a friend are running a tea shop. The delay means tragedy in some cases, for some of the nurses are stranded here without even their fare to return home.

"I should be grateful if you could mention the matter, and through the Editor's influence no doubt the reform would be hastened. My application for State Registration here went in at the end of last year. In the meantime I have spent nearly all my savings, and am doing work of a sort I dislike very much. We are selling out the business as soon as possible and returning home to follow our profession, I did not realise till now how much I love it.

"My appeal for publicity is on behalf of fellow-nurses,

who find themselves unable to follow their profession here no matter what their qualifications are. I have been nursing for 17 years, and could give the names of influential doctors in London, for whom I worked for nine years—afterwards in France on French Flag Nursing Corps, and promoted to be a Supervisor."

[Australia has been slow to obtain statutory regulations for nurses, but we note with satisfaction in the latest report of the Registration Committee of the G.N.C., that reciprocity of registration between England and Wales and New South Wales has at last been agreed upon, so that let us hope the registration authorities at home and in Australia will hurry up, and terminate this period of economic injury to trained nurses.

We greatly sympathise with those nurses in our Dominions who are evidently suffering from lack of reciprocal registration.—Ed.]

CARE FOR COLLEGE PROPERTY.

Fellow B.C.N.—"When I recently had occasion to visit the College after 6 p.m. I was shown the Office and was laughingly told, 'We go to bed at 6 p.m.' and there I saw that all the beautiful tables, etc., were carefully covered with checked sheets. 'You see how we care for your valuable property,' my guide added. And indeed I felt rich after viewing my College premises and all they contain!"

A LESSON FROM THE PAST.

An Internationalist writes.—"When at Geneva I was told by a member of the College of Nursing, Ltd., that our College of Nurses could not succeed because the Nursing Schools were opposed to it. I therefore reminded her that the majority of schools and their officials had in the past opposed State Registration, and the National and International Councils, and yet here in Geneva were hundreds of Registered Nurses from all over the world, and one had only to note the enthusiasm of the 700 nurses present at the Conference to realise what a stupendous success the International Council was. Having signally failed to prevent professional self-government in Great Britain, I had no fear whatever that the minority of nurses who had come forward to secure the consolidation of the whole profession would fail in their work. At the same time the Schools and the Matrons should help us and not oppose us, their present policy anyway cannot succeed."

[All we have to grasp is the "Glory of the Right Way," and the British College of Nurses is going steadily forward along that path.—ED.]

NOTICE.

In reply to enquiries Fellows and Members of the British College of Nurses are entitled to use the letters F.B.C.N., and M.B.C.N., after their names—If S.R.N., is also used it should come first.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING AND THE "MIDWIFE" SUPPLEMENT

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PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR NOVEMBER.

Describe the special diets given to patients suffering from the following diseases: (a) Tuberculosis, (b) Nephritis, (c) Diabetes, (d) Rickets.

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