

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.

THE STANDARD OF NURSING FOR PATIENTS OF INSURANCE COMPANIES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—We have noted with interest the reference made to the Nursing Service of the Mutual Property and Metropolitan Life Insurance Companies in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING and would like to correct an error in the report of the Central Council of District Nursing for London, which may give an erroneous impression.

Neither Company employs any nurses of its own except those who are responsible for the organisation of the service, both of whom are State registered nurses with the C.M.B. and with experience in public health work. The actual nursing of our policyholders is undertaken by the District Nursing Associations which in London and the large towns employ only Queen's or fully trained nurses.

The policy of the Company is one of whole-hearted co-operation because it realises that if nurses were employed by insurance companies one more specialist would be added to the already too large army of health workers entering the home. Nowadays when specialisation in nursing is giving way to generalisation, we consider that co-operation with the existing organisation is better for the patients, the nurses, and for all concerned.

With reference to the village nurses, the companies do not accept this standard of training with any sense of satisfaction, but as the people have to be nursed and the village midwife is the only person to do the work, we accept her services, but look to the future when this lower standard will not be accepted by the country.

In areas where there is no district nursing association, an independent visiting nurse is used by these companies for the work and paid on a visit basis, but as we have only 20 of these nurses and in most cases they are State registered nurses and we are working with over 250 District Nursing Associations, we feel that this proves the close co-operation which exists between the District Nursing Associations and those insurance companies which give a nursing benefit.

If these remarks could be published in your JOURNAL, we should be very grateful.

Yours faithfully,

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[In our opinion if Insurance Societies undertake to give a Nursing Benefit they are not justified in employing midwives to nurse their sick subscribers. The only adequate standard is that of the State Registered Nurse, and in areas where the services of Registered Nurses are not available the Societies should themselves employ Registered Nurses to carry out these duties. If necessary they should work from centres, and, if a wide area has to be covered, should be provided with small cars which they can drive themselves so that distances may quickly be covered and fatigue minimized. An advantage to the nurse herself is that she gets congenial companionship in her off-duty time, instead of leading an isolated life.—ED.]

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

Value of B.C.N. Diplomas.

F.B.C.N., U.S.A.: "May I advise British College Colleagues coming to work in U.S.A. to bring their Diplomas with them I have already found mine most useful in an emergency, as the President's signature is well recognised here, indeed it seems quite a passport in the Nursing World."

Legacies for Nurses.

Private Nurse writes: "I always read with interest reports of legacies left to private nurses which appear in *B.J.N.*, but apparently half the tale is not told. Looking back over a long private nursing connection with a good co-operation, my colleagues have been most fortunate. Here is a short list: Two sisters—one married to patient, who left her £32,000; her sister after nursing for some years two members of one family, an annuity of £500. A third colleague, legacy of £3,000 and £300, enabling her to marry an old love, a farmer; another a legacy of £250 which she cashed, stuffed in an outside pocket of her waterproof, got into bus at Oxford Circus, and found money gone after alighting at Tottenham Court Road! 'No poorer than I was before' was her happy-go-lucky reply when scolded by Sister for carelessness. Two more sisters, one left annuity of £350, and her sister, following year, annuity of £300 and many more gifts. If this is my personal experience on one co-operation, no doubt others share in such good fortune on others. Of course most of these annuitants were permanently attached to patients to whom they had been sent by the Society, though not all, and here is involved a question of professional ethics which might well receive a word in season when discussing private nursing questions."

The Forthcoming Congress of Nurses.

One who was present: "I read the truly international programme of the forthcoming Congress of Nurses to be held in Montreal in July with great delight. I was present on July 1st, 1899, at the meeting of the Matrons' Council, held at 20, Hanover Square, London, when the International Council of Nurses was founded on the initiative of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, with dear Miss Isla Stewart, in the chair—with the support of many leading nurses from our Dominions and from foreign lands. I remember how earnestly the scheme was put forward and how warmly it was received, and now how wonderful and wide-spreading is the oak tree of international good-will which has sprung in 30 years from the planting of that acorn! How I wish I could be present at Montreal on July 9th to meet again the 'explorers' who will there foregather, and whose names appear on the programme: Mrs. Fenwick, Miss Dock, Miss Breay, Miss Nutting. Alas! during the 30 years we have lost many leaders including Miss Isla Stewart, Mrs. Hampton Robb and Sister Agnes Karll. It is to be hoped Miss Snively (Canada) who was present at the founding of the International, will be in Montreal, she will have a specially warm welcome from the Great Britain contingent."

[We are informed that Miss Snively will be the honoured guest of the Canadian Nurses' Association, which she founded, during the Congress celebrations at Montreal. We shall all be delighted to see her again.—ED.]

NOTICE.

We regret we are unable to award a prize this month, no paper of sufficient merit having been received.

PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR MAY.

Describe an ordinary case of scarlet fever and mention the complications that may occur.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)