

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

We wish people would discuss less the probability of War. We firmly believe if all these agitated people would cease talking and writing about it, in and out of season, it would make for peace. Dr. Cyril Norwood, headmaster of Harrow, in a recent sermon of the most alarmist character, concluded with the following expression of opinion which we might all take to heart. "I believe that in God's providence a great duty may be laid upon this country, a great opportunity to lead a distracted world through the floodwaters that are rising all around us, but I am certain we shall fail unless we hold fast and make much more real than ever before in our personal, social, economic and international lives, those spiritual values which have come down to us from the life and example of Jesus Christ Himself."

A Society for the Prevention of Gossip has been started in the village of Beckington, near Frome. The rector says "People who gossip have no godliness in them." Surely he alludes to the passing of scandal. Personally, we enjoy a good crack with neighbours, on current events, and find that people are much more happy and lively when they take an interest in everyday affairs. No: we shall not take a country cottage at Beckington.

The new Children's Hostel and Nursery School of the National Children's Adoption Association at Castlebar, a finely situated house on Sydenham Hill, is admirably adapted for its purpose, and the Queen had a cordial welcome when she paid it a visit recently.

The hostel has accommodation for 40 babies and 20 nurses. During the 16 years of its existence the association has secured the adoption of about 3,500 children. Its aim is to better the lot of each adopted child, and the accounts received of the children's post-adoption lives prove that the association's objects are being attained. Students are trained and prepared for work as children's nurses, matrons of schools, and for similar posts.

Pedestrians will be thankful to note that preliminary steps have been taken in a campaign to secure the re-imposition of a reasonable speed limit. On the initiative of the Pedestrians' Association a "Road Accidents" Parliamentary Group of nearly 100 members of both Houses of Parliament has been formed, with Lord Cecil and Sir Ernest Graham-Little as joint chairmen.

Organisations concerned with promoting greater safety on the roads express a growing feeling that the removal of the former speed limits has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of accidents. It is pointed out that, in spite of the provisions of the Road Traffic Act, the position is no better, if, indeed, it is not actually worse, than when the Act came into operation. While there has been a small reduction in the number of fatal accidents, the total of persons killed and injured rose from 185,000 in 1930 to 208,000 in 1931, and again to 213,000 in 1932.

One result of the growing toll of the road is seen in the demand for hospital and other accommodation in localities where accidents occur.

We note the deaths of two omnibus drivers who have collapsed over the wheel of their vehicles. This is not surprising—as the order of the L.G.O.C. to accelerate speed to 20 miles an hour in London is a terrible strain on drivers of the huge new omnibuses, and is calculated to cause physical damage.

We have been making enquiries amongst drivers and conductors, and find many are strongly opposed to the new order, realising the nerve strain, not only of driving, but in protecting the public. Is there no woman M.P. in the House with the courage to tackle this serious abuse of human rights?

COMING EVENTS.

April 7th.—At the Princess Elizabeth of York Hospital for Children, Shadwell, E.1. Mr. W. R. Bett, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., will give a lantern lecture on "The Thyroid: a Chapter in Folklore and History." The chair will be taken by Dr. Alan Moncrieff, Editor of "Nursing and Diseases of Sick Children." Visitors heartily welcomed. 8.45 p.m.

April 22nd.—The British College of Nurses. Meeting of Council, 39, Portland Place, London, W.1. 2.15 p.m.

April 26th.—National Council of Nurses of Great Britain. Meeting of Executive Committee, 39, Portland Place, London, W.1. 4.30 p.m. Tea, 4 p.m.

April 28th.—General Nursing Council for England and Wales. Monthly Meeting, 20, Portland Place, W.1. 2.30 p.m.

May 4th.—British College of Nurses. "History Dinner," Grosvenor House, Park Lane. W.1. Ball Room. 7.45 p.m. for 8 p.m. Tickets 12s. 6d., from the Secretary, British College of Nurses, 39, Portland Place, London, W.1.

May 12th.—Miss Florence Nightingale. Anniversary of her Birthday.

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 PLIGHT OF PRIVATE NURSING.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Your editorial on "The Plight of Private Nurses" set me thinking. Most of us cannot fail to recognise the plight, but how about the remedy? "United action," yes, but it is not so easy. True, between cases there is often, alas, considerable idle time. But then one is always on call, and never knows from one minute to the next whether one may not be required immediately for an urgent case. There is also, to be honest, a certain amount of inertia on coming in tired from a heavy case and a disinclination to energise about professional affairs. Again, courage is undoubtedly necessary. It always is where abuses are to be tackled, and I fear, life being hard for most of us, we shirk taking an unpopular line, and prefer working for our own hand rather than fighting for the common good. It is a short-sighted policy of course, but so it is. We fear to get the reputation of being contentious.

We ought, of course, for our patient's good, quite as much as our own, to refuse to cover unqualified practice. By that I mean we should not consent to work on an equal footing with unqualified nurses.

The careful and skilled work of a competent registered nurse on day or night duty may be quite undone by an incompetent woman on opposite duty *who is supposed to be competent*, for that is where the mischief comes in. I am not arguing that a useful woman should never be employed as a supplementary help, but it should be recognised that her position and that of the registered nurse, who is in responsible charge, are entirely different.

Another reason for what I may call the "slump" in private nursing is that formerly so many important operations used to be performed in private houses, and two or even three nurses were required. Now most surgical cases, and many medical ones, are sent into nursing homes, or paying wards in hospitals. Many of these could perfectly well be nursed at home, and I believe would be happier in their own surroundings.

Of course a big question is the difficulty of domestic service and the fear of our upsetting and causing unnecessary work to a sensitive staff. I fear we have an

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