

in the full vigour of health and strength it is that of midwifery, both for the sake of the patient, and also because for an old woman to be liable to be called out at any hour of the twenty-four, in all weathers is most unsuitable and even dangerous. Yet few midwives can earn enough to enable them to make provision for their old age, and consequently continue to work when they are physically quite unfit. In the event of the establishment of a State Midwifery Service there should certainly be associated with it a system of contributory insurance, with compulsory retirement at a defined age, or before, on grounds of health, on a pension on which it is possible to live."

The Silent Service.

Miss M. Hamilton writes: "After carefully following your advice to read the Report of the Joint Committee appointed by the Association of Municipal Corporations and the County Councils' Association on Local Authorities Nursing Service, I am amazed, if other nurses have done the same, that we are not more vocal as to its recommendations. Truly we may be regarded as 'the Silent Service' where our professional interests are concerned. How are we to expect the public to understand our point of view unless we express it? Forcibly too, for the world now-a-days is a noisy place, and if we are to be heard, and make an impression, we must speak out."

Sympathy in Support of Mental Nursing a Professional Duty.

A Correspondent writes: "It is good to note the increasing appreciation of mental nursing as a branch of our profession so important that it requires the highest type of nurse. For too long it was looked upon as in quite a different category from general nursing, yet it is far more difficult to minister effectively to a 'mind diseased' than to patients suffering from physical illnesses and injuries. Anyone who has practised nursing of both types has no illusion on this point. Yet mental nursing has its great rewards, and should attract men and women of compassion, who desire to be of use in their day and generation."

Something English.

A Married Nurse in "a far-away spot" in South Africa writes: "I must thank you for the beautiful picturesque Christmas card with kind wishes I received at Christmas-time, very much appreciated in this far-away spot."

We have had some rain, but not enough for our needs. The locusts have been very troublesome this year, they are not content with stripping the trees bare of their leaves, but they even eat one's clothes. It's the corn cricks that eat the buttons!

There are no peaches and very few other fruits to can for the winter, it's not an easy job to housekeep, there's no butcher, baker or grocer to run to round the corner here.

Malaria is very troublesome too. We had a comparatively mild winter, not enough cold to kill the mosquitoes off, hence the reason for the huge ones we have this year. These recent years we seem to have all the plagues of Egypt with us. I read lately that Malmesbury down in the Cape, has an invasion of scorpions, two children died in a few hours after being bitten, and two others are seriously ill, one child was asleep and the scorpion was found under its cot. I pray they won't appear here.

Then quite recently a girl of ten years old was sleeping on the stoep floor at one of the farms near here, when her mother reached her the child's head was swollen enormously with marks like gravel rash on the forehead, back of the neck and cheek, they found the skin of a green snake under the pillow. We gave her plenty of milk and paraffin to drink, and small doses of calomel. The Dutch people place great faith in paraffin for all sorts of things.

I get various bits of nursing of humans as well as of animals, but I hope the time is coming when the people will be enlightened in matters of health, as the ignorance hereabouts is deplorable.

A sort of motor ambulance with a doctor and two nurses has been touring a few districts in the Transvaal, a good idea, I hope it will spread, as it might be the solution to the nursing problem in the far away backveldt—where knowledge is sorely needed.

With our united good wishes I must ask you to excuse corrections, but it's owing to the interruptions of my twin daughters!"

[No greetings appear to convey so much pleasure to our nurse friends in the Dominions as the Royal Christmas cards—and last year they travelled far and wide. We quote from this letter as it is so good for us at home to realise the courage with which people stand up to the difficulties of life where "The butcher and baker and candle-stick maker" are not to be found just round the corner.—Ed.]

Nursing Progress in Australia.

An Australian Friend writes from Subiaco: "I have been away in the East at the Australian Trained Nurses' Conference held recently in Melbourne. We had a wonderful time, discussing Florence Nightingale Foundation, and International Council of Nurses, etc., and in good time the General Secretary will be advising those bodies of our decisions. It is very pleasant to know that at last our Nursing Organisation (there are changes occurring in the constitution, so cannot give you our "correct" name yet) is to be included in the list of countries affiliated in the I.C.N."

It is very wonderful to see the progress that the Profession is making in Victoria, and we follow with interest the establishment of the Royal Victorian College of Nursing.

Perth is so far away from the other cities, the Nullabor Plain is very long (it is four days by train from here to Melbourne) that these rare meetings with the leaders of the Nursing World in Australia are very valuable to us.

I am always delighted to receive the JOURNAL when it arrives. Many thanks for it.

With every good wish."

A subscriber of many years' standing (sending her subscription for the current year) writes: "THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING comes as an old friend, much more so now I am beyond the age for working. The best of good wishes for all work being done for the good of our Nursing Profession."

Miss E. Mackenzie, Leeds, writes: "It is so nice to see the portraits in the Journal of the prominent workers whose names are so familiar and who we in the provinces have no opportunity of meeting."

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PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR MAY.

Name the diseases which can be conveyed by food. What precautions can be taken to prevent the spread of disease in this way?

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