

out of an open window of a hospital ward in the absence of the nurse.

As you point out, it is quite indefensible to leave a ward, even for a short time, unattended by a nurse, and it is therefore essential that two nurses should always be on duty, as the temporary absence of one is sometimes unavoidable. This should be an inviolable rule in every hospital, and in a children's ward it is of urgent importance. It is a point which might well be brought before the Council of King Edward's Hospital Fund for their consideration in connection with the award of grants. The safety of the patients should be the first consideration of all hospital authorities, and this cannot be insured if the arrangements permit wards to be left unattended even for a brief space. I hope that hospital authorities will realise, from the substantial damages awarded to this child and his father in the case to which I have referred, the penalties they may incur if accidents happen to patients in their charge.

I am, Dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

STATE REGISTERED NURSE.

#### "A MAD WORLD, MY MASTERS."

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM—I wonder if those of your readers who have followed the correspondence in *The Times* and other papers on "Nurses' Hours," have noted how few nurses have contributed to the copious amount of ink which has been spilt on paper by all and sundry, till one wearies of their ineptitudes and almost expects some one to write and enquire what the nurses themselves think.

But most nurses, with a shrug of annoyance at being represented in the press as desirous of spending so few hours in the practice of their profession when, in fact, their happiest time is that spent in the wards serving the sick, murmur "A mad world, my masters," or words in that sense, and turn with relief to their chosen work in life. Incidentally does anyone know a happier class of women than those privileged to work for the prevention and cure of disease? I doubt it. Treasured, and very sacred, in the memories of most of us is the gleam of pleasure on the face of a sick or dying person when we come on duty, the murmured thanks for some small office performed. A hospital ward, or a sick room in a private house, becomes for us often a very holy place which few of us would willingly exchange for longer time to spend off duty, at cinemas, and in other trivialities.

As for the criticism of our Matrons, we know well how much gratitude is due from us to the great majority of them, and can afford to treat this with contempt. We are happier, and let us hope better, women for having come in contact with them.

Yours faithfully,

AN INDIGNANT NURSE.

#### KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

##### Motor Murders.

*District Nurse* writes: "All humane persons abominate poison gas and the deaths resulting from its use in Abyssinia—and splendid speeches and letters of remonstrance are published throughout the press, and rightly so. But how about our ghastly 'Motor Murders.' It would be interesting to compare the number of deaths and mutilations at the Italian front and on our roads at home.

"When are we going to demonstrate in person and in print against the horrible loss of life and limb reported daily without one word of organised remonstrance? The truth is, the whole community are motor mad, and really do not care a bean about this carnage, so long as they have not to pay for it. Such callous disregard of the

value and sanctity of life is eating into the very marrow of our sympathy and compassion."

##### The Depreciation of the Sister Tutor.

*A Sister Tutor* writes: "I read Miss Nelson's letter on 'The Depreciation of the Sister Tutor' with great interest. It is amazing that this progressive work for nurses has been 'downed' by their own colleagues on the G.N.C. Our group needs representation on our Governing body. It will be interesting to learn what official title we are now to assume in the Training Schools. Not 'Tutor,' of course, if we may not teach. 'Sister Revisionist' sounds rather revivalist, and has a Moody and Sankey flavour about it to which the orthodox might object. Alas! this constant depreciation of our professional status is no matter for ridicule. What it is doing—and that fast—is to alienate the well-educated and cultured girl from entering the nursing profession."

##### Please Say a Word.

*Sister of Patient* writes: "My sister has been a paying in-patient at one of the best London Hospitals. Nothing could have been kinder than the nurses or cleaner than the surroundings. But the food! It was brought from a distance, and was always stone cold—considering that nutrition was of the first importance in my sister's case, surely some arrangement is not only possible but necessary for presenting food hot and in an appetising form. The same complaint is made by patients in other hospitals I know. Please say a word—I note your excellent Editorial last month in response to such a request." [See *Echoes*, page 118.] We hope under "Nutrition" we may have an illuminating discussion on hospital dietary, especially how to serve food hot in hospital wards, at the I.C.N. Congress next year. Hot plates wheeled round the wards as at "Simpson's" might help. Each patient might then be consulted as to his taste—meat cut thick, thin, fat, lean, etc. No time for such fads, we hear busy nurses exclaim. Don't forget that food is medicine—we have much to learn from foreign countries in this particular.—ED.]

##### The Value of Foreign Travel.

*Miss Ethel Riley* writes: "I returned last Thursday from Vienna. What a beautiful City! I went to the Opera twice—to Semmering for the day, and thoroughly enjoyed the whole of my stay there. I visited the Rudolfiner-haus and was received by the Matron and she was very charming and pleased to show and explain everything. I am sending along some literature—it is in German but you are probably clever and able to read German.

"Matron said she was very anxious to have an exchange of nurses between English and Austrian nurses. Her idea is that an English nurse who can speak German should take the place of one of her nurses—say, for a year—and that the nurse from Austria should take the English nurse's place. The Rudolfiner-haus, I understand, is the oldest training school for nurses—we were most interested in the little museum where the relics of the early days are kept."

#### THE "BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING" AND THE "MIDWIFE" SUPPLEMENT

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##### PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR JUNE.

What is pericarditis? Describe the symptoms, and the points to be observed (a) in the nursing care, (b) in relation to diet.

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