

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.

OBITUARY.

MISS SILVIA HELEN VIAN, S.R.N., F.B.C.N., Q.A.I.M.N.S.R.

Admiral Philip Vian, Captain Christopher Vian, Miss Claire Vian, and Mrs. L. J. Fish, ask you to accept this card with grateful thanks for your sympathy and kindness.

Richmond House, Weston, Bath.

[We greatly value this recognition.—Ed.]

THE LOSS OF THE "COSSACK."

A Naval Sister writes: "I was just heartbroken on learning of the loss of the *Cossack*, when my B.J.N. arrived, and I read 'Santa Caterina' and 'through an amazing silence' I seemed to hear 'the footsteps of the Lord.' I do hope 'A. M. M.' realises how we love her verses; they are, indeed, an inspiration to us all."

"THE NAVY IS HERE."

Sister of Sailor Boys writes: "The whole world knew of *Cossack* and its glorious exploits since liberating British prisoners from a terrible fate—as this historic ship no longer helps to make the enemy realise 'The Navy is here' on the high seas, do not let us forget its glorious history, short lived as were its years of service."

GRENFELL ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

MEDICAL WORK IN LABRADOR AND NORTHERN NEWFOUNDLAND.

66, VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W.1.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING,
19, Queen's Gate, S.W.7.

DEAR MADAM,

On behalf of the people of Labrador and Newfoundland I thank you most sincerely for the splendid notice you have given us in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

We are already receiving orders from this and requests for the leaflet "Nursing in Labrador." We are indeed grateful to you for the help you so generously give us year after year.

Yours very truly,
K. SPALDING, *Hon. Secretary.*

"HOSPITAL NURSE."

C/o MESSRS. HERBERT JENKINS, LTD.,
3, Duke of York Street, St. James', S.W.1.
November 12th, 1941.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,

It was most kind of you to send me a copy of this month's BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING; thank you very much.

I read the review of my book, "Hospital Nurse" with interest, and deeply appreciate the reviewer's generosity. She appears to have commended, for its entertainment value, a book whose sentiments, she feels, have scorned the achievements of her generation of nurses. But have they?

"Hospital Nurse" claims to be nothing more than the impressions and confessions of one modern nurse. They may, or may not, be of modern universal application; I rather think they are. If so, it might be of some use to the women who are planning the future of nursing to know on what lines the future Matrons think. In these uncertain

days it is heartening to plan bravely for the years ahead; but what sort of years will they be if we are content to rest complacently on the laurels of the past?

I will most certainly study the history of nursing economics as E. G. F. suggests; but although it will doubtless stimulate an admiration which I already have for "the generation which demanded legal status and won it," it is not likely to throw much light on the present day problems. I cannot keep harking back to 1919 for inspiration, as at that time I was barely three years old. So much has happened since then.

The present nineteen-year-olds look out on life from a different angle than their mothers and grandmothers. They have their failings, but it is my belief that they have even more virtues. The fact remains that it is from the ranks of these ardent "self-expressionists" that we must pick our nurses.

Without a single scornful glance at the past, I can only repeat, what I have tried to express before, that the present conditions (I do not speak in terms of hours and money) are unsuitable for the modern girl, who even in this time of national crisis appears to be in no hurry to don a nurse's cap and calico; she leans towards other war-time services, and who can blame her?

I am convinced that the answer to this is, not "that she would make a bad nurse, anyhow." Just encourage her to peep at the glamour of life and death—the absorbing human interests of a hospital ward; she will respond. But our present external trappings are no encouragement.

What room is there, then, for complacency?

In justice to my training school, for which I have an affection which does not blind me to the disadvantages it shares with others, may I stress that discipline and order are achieved as well there as anywhere.

E. G. F.'s attempt to compare our early-morning clatter (which we, too, deplore) with the wonderful old M.R.I. *sixty years ago*! was hardly fair. I suggest that she secretes herself early one morning in a ward of the present M.R.I., which, no doubt, is as quiet and orderly as any hospital well can be after 60 years of medical progress. Those must have been wonderful days, but these are different days. Medical progress has added a thousand duties to the work of the modern nurse. Also there have been many changes in the routine care of the patients.

There always will be changes; and at a time when the nursing profession is seething with discontent in one form or another, it seems that the changes might be revolutionary. In many ways that would be a pity.

If the older women, in their more powerful positions, could draw upon their generosity and step down to see the state of mind of the would-be (perhaps I should say *won't-be*) probationer, the future of our profession might benefit from their greater wisdom. As it is, there is an unbridgable gulf.

Yours faithfully,
DOREEN SWINBURNE.

[We have re-read the Review of "Hospital Nurse" by "E. G. F." which appeared in our last issue, and can find nothing commending it for "its entertainment value," neither did she realise that it "scorned the attainments of her generation," for the simple fact that as a professional journalist of world-wide experience she belongs to no generation though her deductions are based on experience.

Alluding to 1919 when the unorganised work of women nurses secured a legal basis on which to build a profession, our authoress tells us she cannot keep "harking back to 1919 for inspiration." Why should she? We would have her hark back many centuries and realise that the efficient nursing of the sick is based on immutable laws, and that the medical profession, even after centuries of time, still demands their application: (1) Sympathy for

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