

## KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

An Assistant Nurse expresses an opinion:—

"Thank you for interview yesterday. I see your point, but those of us who helped to care for the sick and wounded in the last war, and have been nursing off and on ever since, feel that we ought to be left in peace, to earn a living if we can. I have no wish to be enrolled or registered or controlled by Registered Nurses. I look upon the people who employ me as in charge, and the work I do is a mixture of nursing and often domestic help. Why cannot we be left alone, so long as we behave ourselves—and injure no one? Surely the people of this country are capable of judging for themselves who they wish to employ, and who not. The truth is all the Assistant Nurses I know object to all this proposed control—but everything is being done without consulting us in any way. Just now I am on night duty with a very old lady—I sleep on a couch by her bed placed against the wall, so that she cannot get out and injure herself. My pay is 25s. a week, and all found. Many domestics now get double that sum and no one interferes with them. If the Royal College gets its way I shall have to retire and 'come upon the parish.' I am no politician, but the proposals of the Royal College will land hundreds in a mess, and I feel sure the public will object to all this unnecessary interference; life is difficult enough as it is. I had a good education when young, and many happy years. I have done a bit of nursing in chronic sick places but could not bear to see the poor old people bottled up without change or friends."

[This nurse called on us for information—a very intelligent person, who in youth had seen better days. We sympathised with her. She will not enrol, and will be a Home Help if she is not pursued into private houses by a State Registered Nurse, a State Certified Midwife, or an enrolled Assistant Nurse, as proposed by R.C.N.—ED.]

An M.D., interested in Nursing, writes:—

"Thanks for last month's Editorial. It was hot and strong, but interested me greatly, as a niece I am very fond of was plucked by the G.N.C., and no wonder; some of the questions were merely teasers. As she is really fond of nursing she will have another go at it, and if she fails again, means to do war work, and after the war ends go to a Dominion and find occupation in the open. I have written my Member as you requested."

[For which thanks.—ED.]

"Price Above Rubies."

A *distracted Matron* writes: "How about ward maids? It is impossible to get women for this work, and, as you know, they are just the most indispensable of workers in the wards. The fact is that many of these young women are now in the Nursing Service Reserve, or 'Assistant Nurses' decorated with ribbons and stars by an admiring Ministry of Health! And naturally scrubbing and cleaning for the comfort of the sick is not within their province."

"The nursing staff in this hospital often work 60 hours a week, and unless something is done we must close down."

[Nothing can be more serious than the question of domestic work at the present time, and should the Reconstruction Committee of the R.C.N. enforce its policy, girls, now wardmaids, will naturally aspire to be Assistant Nurses. Why not? Short training, no written test of knowledge, high salaries, legal status, and there you are. These pupil Assistant Nurses do not intend to become domestic drudges. One reform necessary in the near future must be that the exploitation of the public by persons supplying bogus nurses must be made a legal offence.—ED.]

## THE MIDWIFE.

### CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF GAS AND AIR ANALGESIA BY MIDWIVES.

In the application of Rules E.10 (a) and (b), the Board regards the administration by a midwife, acting as such, of gas and air by Minnitt's or similar apparatus for the purpose of producing analgesia during labour as treatment within her province, provided that:—

1. She has, either before or after enrolment, received at an institution approved by the Board for the purpose, special instruction in the essentials of obstetric analgesia and has satisfied the institution that she is thoroughly proficient in the use of the apparatus;

2. The patient has within one month before her confinement been examined by a registered medical practitioner who has handed to the midwife a certificate in writing that the patient is in a fit condition for gas and air administration, and

3. One other person being one or other of the following:—

- (a) A State certified midwife, or
- (b) A State registered nurse, or
- (c) A senior medical student, or
- (d) A pupil-midwife, or
- (e) A retired midwife who has surrendered her certificate in accordance with Section 5 (1) of the Midwives Act, 1936, or
- (f) A woman who is over 21 years of age and who is, and has been for at least a year:—

- (i) A V.A.D. or ordinary member of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John, or
- (ii) A whole-time member or part-time auxiliary of the Civil Nursing Reserve

is present at the time of administration in addition to the midwife in charge of the case.

Administration by a midwife of any anaesthetic, otherwise than under the personal direction and supervision of a registered medical practitioner, is regarded as treatment outside her province.

In our opinion, V.A.D.s and auxiliary members of the Civil Nursing Reserve, cannot be considered qualified for this responsibility.

#### WORD FOR THE MONTH.

A man shulde not bowe for any fortune or trouble of mynde. . . . To tollerate those things whiche do seme bytter or grevous (whereof there be many in the lyfe of man and in fortune) betokeneth a good courage, and also moche constauce.—SIR THOMAS ELYOT (1533).

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#### THE PRIZE COMPETITION.

We much regret no Paper of sufficient merit has been received for publication.

#### PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR DECEMBER.

Describe the symptoms of Smallpox and its necessary nursing care and disinfection.

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