

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.

NURSING ON THE DOWN GRADE.

We publish the following letter received from the Ministry of Labour, where recently thousands of Registered Nurses were compelled to register with complacent young persons entirely ignorant of nursing affairs.

The anecdotes appear on page 76, July issue.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE,
PRESS OFFICE,
St. James's Square,
London, S.W.1.

July 16th, 1943.

DEAR MADAM,—We have read with some concern the anecdotes quoted on page 76 of the July number of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, as they reflect adversely and, we feel, unjustly on the work of the Ministry of Labour and National Service.

We should be much obliged if you would kindly furnish us with the names of the registrants and Ministry of Labour offices concerned, so that we may investigate these complaints without delay.

Yours faithfully,

EDITH BASE.

The Editor,

BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

July 17th, 1943.

To MISS EDITH BASE,

Ministry of Labour and National Service,
St. James's Square, S.W.1.

DEAR MADAM,—I beg to acknowledge your letter dated July 16th, concerning the anecdotes published in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING for July, 1943.

I note your demand for information concerning the Registrants and Ministry of Labour offices; the two anecdotes published were only two of a number of adverse criticisms which we received at the office of this Journal from experienced Registered Nurses who were interviewed by young unprofessional persons, who, apparently, know nothing of either the ethics or standards of professional nursing.

These posts, in the opinion of Registered Nurses, should have been allocated to professional women, who would know how to investigate professional affairs without offence.

I am directed by the Editor to refuse to give any names to your Department, and she advises that for the future the Minister of Labour should appoint professional persons to deal with professional affairs.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

MAUDE R. ANGEL,

Secretary.

"HOPE TOLD A FLATTERING TALE."

MADAM,—We note in the June issue of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING that a Student Nurse will welcome the Assistant Nurse, "hoping they will relieve us of the drudgery in the wards." I for one do not intend to do any such thing. We Assistant Nurses are forming ourselves into a strong National Association, so that we can protect

ourselves against exploitation in hospitals and outside. We have powerful friends—Lord Horder, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Labour, the General Nursing Council, our own Assistant Nurses' Committee—and Miss Snowden is helping us to organise. We mean to have our rights, so that's that! Amongst us are many well-educated women. It is probable that we shall nurse public assistance hospitals throughout the country—the voluntary hospitals, for the time being, training Student Nurses—but we shall not be satisfied to do all the drudgery. There seems no reason why we should not be promoted Sisters and Tutors for our own group, and it won't be long before the Labour Party will be in power to protect us.

Yours sincerely,

AN ASSISTANT NURSE.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

"Matron One of Us."

"Mouse" writes: "It was very naughty of 'A Rebel' to send you our anti-Communist chorus. May I add a line? We nurses here are of opinion that if the majority of Matrons had sympathised with the rank and file of Registered Nurses there would have been no excuse for Messrs. Brown and Bevin to depreciate the standards of the Nursing profession and risk the efficient nursing of the helpless poor.

"This is quite a large and very busy hospital in an industrial city, and we have never been short of well-educated and enthusiastic Student Nurses. Why? *Because our Matron is one of us.* She is head, fount and example to the whole nursing staff, and encourages the individuality (growth of the inner man she calls it) of every member of the staff, including the ward-maids. She works early and late—no personal self-indulgence—and when one tries to stop her she just laughs and confesses, 'Don't tell, but I love to exercise every faculty I possess all the time—life is so short.' No Assistant Nurses will disturb discipline in this hospital. The best is only good enough for *our patients.*"

Nursing Back to Primitive Times.

A Registered Nurse and Certified Midwife writes: "Mother delivers herself of child. Waits seven hours for baby and herself to be washed and cord tied. Kept baby warm with placenta attached. I don't think I have heard of anything more hideous. Mother engaged a nurse from the County Nursing Association, and prepaid doctor's fee; when called he was out and nurses did not come when called on telephone. Should this woman be expected to pay midwifery fee or should she sue the Association for neglect?"

It was her ninth child, and they are both doing well. Had it been a primipara what would have happened? Is it that the State thinks partly trained nurses are good enough, that the others are coming down to their level?"

[Congratulations to mother and babe that they are alive and well. The Report of the Midwives' Salaries Committee just issued and reviewed on page 96, if put into practice, should in the near future prevent such suffering. We hope the recommendations in the Report will be considered urgent and pushed forward with vigour.—Ed.]

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