

THE EDITOR'S LETTER-BOX.

Correspondence on all subjects is invited, but we cannot in any way be responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents, who must give their name and address as a guarantee of good faith, but not necessarily for publication. Correspondents are reminded that brevity of style and conciseness of statement greatly facilitate early insertion.

Poor-Law Nurses and Trade Unions.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—Poor-Law nurses in different parts of the country are now being urged to join a Trade Union. Without any doubt Trade Unions have proved of great benefit to the employees in most industries, but it is submitted that many Trade Union methods, particularly the strike, ought not to be employed on behalf of nurses engaged in the care of the sick and aged poor. Apart from this objection, it is extremely doubtful whether such methods could be employed effectively on behalf of Poor-Law nurses.

Certainly these nurses do require an organisation to look after their interests, and for many reasons the National Poor-Law Officers' Association Incorporated is the best for their purposes. For a subscription of 5s. a year this Association offers to Poor-Law nurses exactly the same advantages (except that very doubtful one, the strike weapon) as those offered by Trade Unions, the subscriptions to which vary from 17s. 4d. to 26s. a year. A very large number of Poor-Law nurses in England and Wales are already members of the Association or its Approved Society. There are separate sections for Poor-Law nurses in the branches of the Association, and those sections manage their own affairs through committees composed of matrons and nurses elected by the members of the sections. The Executive of the Association has also a Nursing Committee, on which medical officers, matrons, and nurses are represented, dealing entirely with questions affecting the Poor-Law Nursing Service. The National Poor-Law Officers' Association is also closely in touch with the Association of Poor-Law Unions (the Guardians' Association). The Conciliation Council for the Poor-Law Service, established by those two Associations, consists of an equal number of representatives from each of the two organisations.

It will therefore be seen that in the National Poor-Law Officers' Association Poor-Law nurses have all the advantages of a separate organisation of their own, with the additional advantage of having behind it the great weight and experience of the Association's Central Executive and Parliamentary Committee. The Association can justly claim to have done more than any other organisation to improve the pay and general conditions of service of Poor-Law nurses. At its instance the Local Government Board (now Ministry of Health) sanctioned for Poor-Law officers war bonuses in accordance with the scales in operation for Civil Servants, and the majority of nurses in the Poor Law who are now receiving these bonuses have obtained them through the efforts of this Association. During the past eighteen months the Association has successfully represented Poor-Law nurses in no less than sixteen arbitrations relating to claims for war bonus. The reductions in the hours of duty of nurses recently adopted by many Boards of Guardians are mainly due, in the first instance, to the Return of Hours of Duty and Leave of Resident Poor-Law Officials which the Local Government Board called for in 1914 at the instigation of the National Poor-Law Officers' Association, and, latterly, to the Association's propaganda work and the recommendations of the Service Conciliation Council. I should also mention that the National Poor-Law Officers' Association has been in sympathy with the chief aims and objects of the College of Nursing since its inception, and a considerable proportion of the members of the Association's Nurses' Sections are also members of the College.—Yours faithfully,

JOHN SIMONDS, Secretary.

National Poor-Law Officers' Association Incorporated,
Norfolk House, Norfolk Street, Strand,
August 10, 1920.

The Status of Hospital Domestic Service.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—In this week's issue of THE HOSPITAL your correspondent, Gladys M. E. Leigh, says, "It is as futile to suggest that domestic service in a hospital should be a stepping-stone into the nursing service as it would be to suggest that a R.A.M.C. orderly might advantageously qualify in medicine." I should like to say that I fail to see why a R.A.M.C. orderly, given the necessary funds and environment, and naturally endowed with the brains and that sense of honour and chivalry so neces-

sary to the profession, should *not* qualify in medicine; just as I am at a loss to understand why the naturally refined and clever daughter of a manual worker should not make an excellent sick nurse if she feels that to be her vocation and undergoes the necessary training. One might as well say it were futile to suggest that a once humble grocer is to-day Sir Thomas Lipton, or that the orphaned nephew of a shoemaker is the present Prime-Minister of England.—Yours faithfully,

August 16, 1920.

"A WORKER."

Gifts and Bequests.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE HOSPITAL has been left £150 by Mr. Henry Lyne, of Portland Place, W.

THE Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, has, failing certain family trusts, been left half the residue of the estate of Mr. F. W. Hasluck.

MEMBERS of the London Stock Exchange have collected £2,500 towards Lord Denbigh's appeal for £200,000 for the Royal National Orthopædic Hospital.

SIR JOHN THOMAS, a paper manufacturer, of Wooburn, Bucks, has left £1,000 each to the London Temperance Hospital, the High Wycombe Hospital, and the Marlow Cottage Hospital.

SIR FREDERICK COOK, Bart., Chairman of Cook, Son and Co., of St. Paul's Churchyard, left £15,000 to any London hospitals or to any central funds for the benefit of London hospitals as his executors shall determine. We are informed that this sum has been allocated by the executors to King Edward's Hospital Fund for London.

MR. T. W. TAYLOR, of Repton, has left £1,000 to the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary to endow a bed, and £500 to the Derbyshire Children's Hospital.

GUY'S HOSPITAL has been left £1,000 to endow a bed by Mr. A. C. Cole, of Newbury, Bucks.

THE ESSEX COUNTY HOSPITAL, Colchester, has been left £100 by Mrs. Wratislaw, of Colchester.

DAME E. L. LIBERTY, widow of Sir A. L. Liberty, of the Regent Street firm, has left £250 to the Royal Bucks Hospital, Aylesbury.

By the will of the late Sir George Watson McAlpine, of Broad Oak, Accrington, Lancashire, the Victoria Hospital, Accrington, is left the sum of £1,000.

MR. J. H. HEWITT, of Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire, has bequeathed £500 to the Retford Hospital for a Hewitt Sanatorium Fund, and £500 similarly to the Bourton-on-the-Water Cottage Hospital. He has left also £200 to St. Mark's Hospital, City Road.