

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.

The Late Sir Henry Burdett.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—Will you allow me to express to you and THE HOSPITAL staff my sincere sympathy in the great sorrow that has fallen upon you by the loss of your "Editor-in-chief." Sir Henry did so much for nurses that everywhere they will feel that a strong friend has been taken from them. I have the memory of a visit to our hospital, and a long and helpful talk, as well as kind communications at other times.

Trusting you will have strength for the difficult task of carrying on the great work, I am, Yours sincerely,

ADELINE E. CABLE,
Matron.

Salisbury Infirmary,
May 8, 1920.

The Position of the Hospital Saturday Fund.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—My attention has been directed to a paragraph appearing in THE HOSPITAL of the 1st instant, under the heading "The Cup-Tie Programme," in which references are made to the "Hospital Saturday Fund." As certain statements made therein may lead to an erroneous impression, I venture to think that a brief record of the Fund's activities would not be out of place.

Collections are made week by week in 20,000 Metropolitan workshops, factories, and business houses, and it is estimated that 400,000 people are regular subscribers to these collections. The honorary workers are numbered by the thousand, whilst, in addition, there are thirty-three strong and active local committees working enthusiastically in and around the City of London. These figures scarcely warrant the assertion that "the Fund touches but a very small percentage of the works and workshops of London." That there are still opportunities for advancement no one will deny, and, if the progress made during recent years is studied it will be found that these opportunities are not being neglected. In the year 1914 the income was £40,676, in 1919 it reached £74,848, whilst during the first three months of the current year the amount received exceeds that of the corresponding period of last year by £3,000.

It is further stated in the paragraph under review "If the total sum collected by the Fund is compared with the number of 'workers' in London it will be seen how few contribute to it." I have already referred to the splendid support given to the Hospital Saturday Fund by the "workers," but it must also be borne in mind that the employes of a large number of firms contribute direct to their local hospital. The Fund does not interfere with any such collections, for whilst it is anxious to extend its activities, it does not desire to progress to the disadvantage of any individual hospital.

The *raison d'être* of the paragraph in question was the Cup-tie football match at Stamford Bridge. There were 50,000 spectators present on that occasion, and a large majority of them came from Birmingham, Huddersfield, and other provincial places. "Most of them," therefore, were entirely outside the scope of the Fund. It was quite possible that the London spectators are contributors towards the amount which is annually received from the supporters of the Chelsea Football Club.

I am, yours faithfully,

PHILIP A. INMAN, Secretary.

Head Office : 54 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C. 1.
May 4, 1920.

[We gladly publish Mr. Inman's letter. It raises more than one point of great importance at the present moment. We shall therefore return to the subject in our next issue.—ED. THE HOSPITAL.]

A Private Nurse's Earnings.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—As a private nurse working on my own account I beg to challenge the statement in THE HOSPITAL of May 1 that "the income earned by a well trained private nurse compares more than favourably with many other spheres of women's work." The statement that a private nurse earns £3 3s. or upwards a week plus expenses is erroneous and misleading. A good many medical men and most patients consider a minimum fee of £3 3s. exorbitant, and in very many cases a nurse is asked to reduce her fees.

However, admitting for the sake of argument that, provided her powers of endurance, mental and physical, were equal to the strain, a really well trained, well qualified, educated nurse might average ten months' work out of thirteen at an average fee of £13 13s. a month, her budget would work out approximately as follows : Fees earned, £136 10s., less rent for unfurnished room, £20; three months' board, light, and fire at £8 per month, £24; upkeep of uniform, trunks, books, instruments, etc., £10; telephone charges, £1; upkeep of furnishings, £5; making a total to be deducted of £60, so that the fees earned, less expenses, are £76 10s.

In order to earn rather less than £80 a year, plus all expenses, a private nurse must work very long hours, in many cases day and night, snatching sleep when she can between being called up. Her scanty off-duty, never more than two hours daily—often less—must be taken always at the patient's convenience.

By the nature of her duties and the conditions she lives under, a private nurse is debarred from participating in any social, intellectual, or political life whatever. She is called upon to adapt herself to varying degrees of domestic efficiency, and must be content to live a life almost entirely restricted to the four walls of a sick-room. She is constantly exposed to risk from infection, and when ill is entirely without income and must fall back on her scanty savings for support. The number of years she is capable of doing good work are few compared with the number of years she is incapable of working at such high pressure. If these facts are pondered over the scarcity of private nurses will be understood.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
"ONE WHO KNOWS."

[Our correspondent's letter raises interesting points, and we hope that other private nurses and women workers in other spheres will state their experiences. "One Who Knows," however, confuses her figures. To her income it is only fair to add the cost of her board, lodging, and laundry for ten months (forty weeks)—certainly at present prices not less than £80. This brings her total earnings to £216 10s. How many members of the teaching profession, for instance, earn more? And how many women workers are there who, after necessary expenses are paid, have £76 10s. in hand for mufti, amusements, personal travelling, and saving, spread over a period of twelve weeks in each year?—Ed. T.H.]

Industrial Hygiene.

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—The letter in your issue of May 1, appearing above the name of Miss Gladys M. E. Leigh, prompts me to write to the effect that in the Industrial Hygiene Section of the Birmingham Congress next July the Institute is arranging for a discussion of welfare work in factories. If any of your readers, nurses or others, desire to read a paper or join in a discussion on this or kindred matters, I shall be glad if they will communicate with me, and I will make arrangements accordingly.—Yours faithfully,

E. H. SNELL,

Recording Secretary, Industrial Hygiene Section,
Birmingham Congress of the Royal Sanitary Institute.