

MADAM,—I must apologise for again taking up space in your paper, but the proposition made by Miss Isla Stewart in the issue of the 12th inst., "That we form ourselves into a Matron's Council to create and encourage business habits amongst ourselves, and to encourage the exchange of ideas and criticisms on our methods of work," is one which meets a long-felt want amongst Matrons of Hospitals, more especially amongst those who work in the country. In London and in the larger towns where there are several Hospitals, a matron usually has some colleague with whom she is on terms of friendship, and with whom council can be taken and mutual help given; but even under these circumstances one is surprised how professionally isolated is a Matron's life, and how little sympathy either in work or difficulty is extended to her by professional colleagues at large. The Royal British Nurses' Association has done much to bind together Nurses of all degrees, and has earned the warm gratitude of Nurses who think. But, again, this influence is chiefly for good in the Metropolis, and as its work appears to isolated members like myself, when I occasionally attend a Council Meeting, to be almost necessarily of an official character, I have for long felt a need of such a Council as Miss Stewart suggests, where we Matrons could quite unofficially meet and discuss in detail matters relating to our professional work and status, and suggest and formulate plans for future progress and improvement. Miss Stewart touches on a very apparent evil when she draws attention to the lack of business knowledge on the part of Nurses. We calmly accept the responsibility of a seat on the Council or Executive Committee of our Association—knowing absolutely nothing of the procedure of business—hardly recognizing that in so doing we are undertaking a duty for which we are not qualified. I therefore heartily agree with Miss Stewart, and hope that one of the first duties of the new Council, should it be organised, will be to accept no Matron as a member who is not prepared, within a given date, to make herself thoroughly conversant with the procedure of public meetings and business. Women working in other important Societies are eagerly availing themselves of this method of education, without which no true progress can be made. The Debating Society suggested by Miss Annesley Kenealy, especially if her wise suggestion of open meetings to those ladies engaged in kindred branches of work was adopted, would prove an excellent method of giving us that self-confidence which women so greatly need in public; and also of extending our knowledge and interest in their valuable labours for the community at large. Let us confess the truth. We Matrons have been, in the past, *terribly narrow*, and, in consequence, sadly unsympathetic in matters beyond our own *personal* control. We have in Miss Isla Stewart an example of a truly liberal minded and generous woman. I feel we cannot do better than follow her lead—it will bring us into "fresh fields and pastures new." Never oblivious, dear Editor, of the debt we owe to "press representation" bestowed upon us by your arduous labours.—I am, &c.,

CHARLOTTE OKELL,  
Registered Nurse,  
Matron of the Bridgewater Infirmary.

## Medical Matters.

### THE THYROID GLAND.



There is, at present, in medical circles of all countries a very active discussion proceeding as to the precise action and function of the thyroid gland. The manner in which it enlarges in certain diseases proves that it must possess very considerable importance in the human economy, and the still further fact, which has recently been discovered, that injections, or even internal medicines composed of the gland tissue possess a marked power of curing other diseases, conclusively proves that it is essential almost to life. The curious point has also been elicited that even in those diseases in which there is an enlargement of the gland, considerable benefit results from the same treatment. An important paper recently published by a well-known German physiologist goes to prove that, of the two theories concerning the function of the gland—namely, that it either destroys or alters some substance in the blood which is dangerous to health, or secretes some substance necessary to health—the latter is the more probable explanation. In connection with this it must be remembered that the thyroid is one of those glands which are unprovided with ducts, and which, therefore, are only connected with the rest of the body by means of blood and lymph vessels—a fact which supports the latter theory and goes far to disprove the former. The author, to whom we have alluded, shows that there is probably a close connection between the action of the thyroid and the hepatic function. It is more probable that the secretion from the gland is removed and carried into the circulation by means of the lymphatic vessels, because the colloid-like material of the gland chiefly accumulates in its lymph spaces.

### NERVOUS JAUNDICE.

In reply to the old inquiry as to whether life was worth living, the wit replied that it all depended upon the liver. And the truth of the saying has been further exemplified by cases which have been recently recorded in a French contemporary, of jaundice produced, not in consequence of ordinary causes, but, after merely emotional excitement. It is by no means unusual to hear people complain that some worry or trouble has "upset their liver," but it is comparatively rare for the disturbance to be so great, as to cause actual jaundice, although, of course, instances are on record. In the cases alluded to, who were all children, girls aged nine, ten and a half, and thirteen and a half years old respectively, fright or fits of anger are attributed as

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