

## BRIBING MOTHERS.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—The letter of "A District Nurse" in a recent issue is very interesting, and I had hoped to see the opinions she asked for, as there are certainly several different opinions on the subject. The recent report in your supplement of "The Sheffield Dried Milk Scheme," throws light on the attitude of the poor of that city towards health teaching. It appears to me that those who have formed their estimate of the poor through working in remote country districts, or through reading Miss Loanes' books, are ill-equipped to deal with the same class in other rural places and some towns. Here, in the market-gardening district of Middlesex, health teaching, unaccompanied by gifts, is not only rejected, but is strongly resented, no matter how kindly, patiently, and persistently it is offered. Seeking an explanation from one nice cottage mother, who has given me much enlightenment as to local views, I learnt that unless one bestows a gift with each piece of advice, and holds out the hope of more benefits to come, the recipient considers that one "has no call to interfere" with her. It is not a question of maternal solicitude. That is a quality held in varying degrees by most mothers of all classes, and every mother firmly believes—regardless of her conduct—that she possesses it in the maximum degree. An experience I had lately recurs to me. For three weeks I paid a daily visit to one of the most grossly neglected babies I have ever seen, advising the mother, who can neither read nor write, on every point of its welfare. At the outset I gave her what little I could give for the baby's comfort—woolies, soft rugs, ointment, etc. But there were other small necessaries, and I advised her how to procure those in the cheapest way possible, her own means being sufficient to enable her to get them. She became more and more disregarding of my instructions, and at last told me that she would rather have her own way with the baby. So she had it, and five weeks of it killed the poor mite, who had previously been gaining. She mourned him with drawn blinds for five days, a new picture hat with an immense ostrich feather, and a number of wreaths for the tiny coffin, and much sympathy was bestowed on her in her "sad loss."

When I ceased visiting her, I made a brief statement of the facts to the old woman who was formerly the "Gamp" in this village, and who was interested in the case, her interest unfortunately being reactionary. She seemed to think some expression of opinion was required of her, and began in a judicial tone: "Well, Miss, I don't know *how much you gave her*." They are all like that in this district, they seem quite unable to see value in anything but material gifts. Here, and in all places where cupidity reigns, the only way to secure protection for the health and lives of the helpless infants is to avail oneself of the means at hand, namely, that same cupidity, and to gain by bribing what cannot be won by a higher method. By the resultant increased health and happiness of the children it is possible that a

higher ideal of maternal duty may be stimulated in the mothers.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

A HEALTH MISSIONER.

---

## Comments and Replies.

*Provincial Nurse.*—The aims of the Nurses' Missionary League are twofold, to unite as volunteer members all nurses who hope to become foreign missionaries, and as associate members nurses who are interested in Christian work at home and abroad. The secretary is Miss Richardson, Sloane Gardens House, 52, Lower Sloane Street, S.W., who is pleased to give information to nurses in regard to the League.

*District Nurse.*—A Justice of the Peace may order the removal of the body of a person who has died from an infectious disease (on receiving a certificate to that effect from a medical practitioner) from an inhabited room to a mortuary. The same applies to any case in which a dead body lying in a room is thought to endanger the health of the inmates.

---

## NOTICE.

### OFFICIAL ORGAN.

The BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING is the official organ of the following important Nursing societies:

The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland.

The International Council of Nurses.

The National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland.

The Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses

The Registered Nurses' Society.

The School Nurses' League.

As their official organ is widely read by the members of these societies, the Editor will at all times be pleased to find space for items of news from the Secretaries and members.

Exclusive news being copyright, papers quoting from our columns must give the name of this journal as the source of their information.

---

## Notices.

### CONTRIBUTIONS.

The Editor will at all times be pleased to consider articles of a suitable nature for insertion in this Journal—those on practical nursing are specially invited. The Editor will be pleased to receive paragraphs, such as items of nursing news, results of nurses' examinations, new appointments, reports of hospital functions, also letters on questions of interest to nurses, and newspapers marked with reports of matters of professional interest.

Such communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not necessarily for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)