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.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES.

From SIR ERNEST GRAHAM LITTLE, M.D., F.R.C.P., M.P.

New Address-Temporary: 19, Upper Wimpole Street, W.1. February 3rd, 1944.

THE EDITRESS,

BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, 19, Queen's Gate, S.W.7.

DEAR MADAM.

May I thank you for your pleasant reference to myself

in your issue of January, 1944.

I enclose a reprint of an Address which perhaps you may have noticed, as it was given in joint session with the Nursery Nurses' Association, under the auspices of the Society of Individualists. I believe that the nursing profession is just as much interested in opposing the Beveridge and other plans, for a State Medical Service, as is the medical profession, and I hope that your Journal will take this point of view.

With regard to the External Council, if this subject

interests you, I may point out that this Section of the University, in which I have been interested for nearly 40 years, and which has been my chief life work, has made enormous progress. I also enclose a little statement de-

scribing the position.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely.

E. GRAHAM LITTLE.

[In our last issue we congratulated the Council of External Students of the University of London, in electing Sir Ernest Graham Little, M.D., F.R.C.P., M.P., as Chairman of Council, and observed that it would appear owing to recent disastrous legislation Registered Nurses also needed a well-instructed and intelligent voice in Parliament.

We have to thank Sir Ernest Graham Little for literature including his address on Public Health Services, to which we hope to devote some space in our next issue.—Editor.]

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE. Here is Something Sacred.

A Student Nurse writes: "May I say how greatly all the Student nurses I know would value working under 'Hospital Sister,' whose letter appeared in your last issue. Far from 'sweeping her away' it is just such splendid Sisters who turn out the type of nurse we should all aim to be. Patients first, of course, and a pride in the cleanliness and brightness of the ward conduces to the wellbeing of the sick, and I own to a love of polishing and tidying-up. An old Sister I have worked under once said to me: 'If I find any dust I shall rub your nose in it!' When an advanced curriculum is defined—the first course should be of a domestic nature, and dietetics is next best. I know it is very unfashionable to be 'womanly' in these days, but, after all, we are women and should be proud of our special qualifications for the wonderful work we are privileged to do in this world."

Registered Nurse writes: "I am a Catholic and associated with Nuns, so am used to the nursing of the sick being considered a sacred avocation as so beautifully expressed by 'Hospital Sister' in last month's British JOURNAL OF NURSING. I thank her for such a lovely letter."

We Must Refuse to Pay.

A Young Matron writes: "Thank you heartily for this month's British Journal of Nursing. As ever, I shall be guided by its advice and do what I can to retrieve the terrible situation in which our beloved profession has been placed by the action of the late Minister of Health, in thrusting his 'Nurses Act, 1943,' through Parliament without consulting us concerning our own affairs. If this is all the consideration Registered Nurses are to expect, after all the political claims that we are fighting this war for justice to mankind, the sooner such a claim is dropped, the better. I, personally, much prefer not to be humbugged by specious politicians. Why the Nursing profession is considered ripe for contemptuous tyranny, and the medical profession treated with consideration is amply apparent. We are treated like idiots, discouraged from taking an intelligent interest in our profession as such, penalised if we dare to exercise what faculties we possess, and misguided by many superior officers.

Thus whilst medical men and women refuse to be bamboozled by interested politicians, as put forth by the British Medical Journal and the Lancet, we are misled by an interested trade Press, and if we do not see the British

JOURNAL OF NURSING, never learn the truth.
"I await further recommendations through our only professional journal, as to what steps we can now take to smash up this de-grading situation as, of course, it must be done."

[Quite so. If the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, as demanded by the Nurses Act, 1943, continues to use our money to finance our de-gradation, we must fight it. Parliament has never discussed the matter that Registered Nurses must meet the cost of administering the Nurses Acts, 1943, which is a very gross perversion of justice.—Editor.]

" Nothing Can be More Worrying."

A Matron writes: "I wonder why matronships are so eagerly sought after by nursing officials and others. my personal experience nothing can be more worrying and thankless, and at present there appears to be a wave of resentment against us for which our high salaries will not compensate. Medical Superintendents appear to think our office is quite superfluous and resent recognition by the I often wish myself back in my ward as Sister, working in peace for appreciative surgeons and patients. How different in the old days when the Matron had an honourable position in the hospital, selected her own probationers, and had no difficulty in training and mothering them, young women devoted to their nursing schools from whose friends a constant flow of new probationers were selected. I have attended some Matrons' meetings recently where I regret to note they appeared very futile in supporting their honourable status.

"I note you suggest that Matrons should be specially trained and qualified for their responsible duties, and indeed a course would be welcome, especially if a Diploma was available. It is not only the war which is creating difficulties, but lack of organisation for the higher nursing

posts.

What do We do Now?

In reply to the above question we assure our colleagues that we hope to place some suggestions before them for consideration at an early date.

Inspired by a sense of professional duty to the sick of all classes, we are far from helpless, and our policy must be bold and well defined, and as all our chief opponents are known to us as managers and officials employing nurses, we must realise the powers for evil up against the State Registered Nurses who claim justice and financial independence. -EDITOR.

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