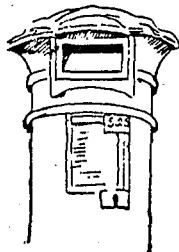


Letters to the Editor.

NOTES, QUERIES, &c.



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.

A FEARLESS REPLY.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I do not take, and seldom see, the *Hospital* newspaper, in fact, I never read a word of it unless someone sends me a clipping from it. Even then, I would seldom think it worth while, or, indeed, compatible with self-respect, to notice any of the ill-natured and vulgar scolding in which it indulges (reminding one of a snarling, yapping, little cur dog); however, in a cutting which I have received of February 23rd, I notice my own name, used in a way, and with inferences, which I cannot but regard as impertinent in the extreme.

I desire simply to say to the members of the Provisional Committee of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland that there is probably no one in the world who has so little influence, in America, as the Editor of the *Hospital* paper, and, as far as I myself am concerned, I should certainly regard it as a stupidity to share his opinions on any subject whatever.

I am, etc.,

LAVINIA L. DOCK,

Hon. Secretary, International Council of Nurses, and Secretary of the American Federation of Nurses.

[The impertinence to which Miss Dock alludes was conveyed by the Editor of the paper to which she refers, in a recent issue when he *affected to believe* that this brilliant little lady was incapable of realising the condition of nursing politics in this country. The fact that Miss Dock has spent two years in Europe acquainting herself with the true condition of nursing organisation makes his fatuous remarks all the more insulting.—Ed.]

STRAY LAMBS ARE WELCOME.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Those nurses amongst your readers who have no chance of co-operation because our hospitals have no Leagues to join, read with pleasure your announcement in last week's issue that unaffiliated nurses will be welcomed at the Paris Conference. It is not our fault that we are "outsiders" from the National Council, especially here in Scotland. Very little has been done so far to arouse our interest in anything outside our daily hospital routine, and where those in authority don't take the initiative it is very difficult for the rank and file to move. We ought

to have a Scottish Nurses' Association, as the more progressive Irish have theirs, but we are waiting for a Huxley to arise and lead. Anyway, several stray lambs will find their way into the Conference fold.

Yours very truly,
CALEDONIA.

[We would draw our correspondent's attention to Miss Dock's letter, on page 251, to the Provisional Committee, and by her request published in this issue of our Journal. It is a charming letter, and if we know anything of the writer the "stray lambs" will find themselves her special care at Paris. Several Matrons of Scottish hospitals have already intimated their intention of attending the Conference. We hope it will be possible for some Sisters and Nurses to come, too.—Ed.]

THE CHARACTER OF THE MIDWIFE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I am very glad to see someone putting in a word for the "high principled, honorable, conscientious" midwife. She exists not only here and there, but in her thousands, and yet, only too commonly, the idea people have of midwives—including those who ought to know better—is that they are, as a class, both ignorant and unconscientious, and that nothing more is to be expected of them.

I wish I could depict adequately some midwives I have known of the very highest type of womanhood. At the service of the poor, day and night, working in houses where there is nothing for their use, under circumstances of great personal discomfort, for the beds of the patients are very often infested with fleas, to say nothing of other entomological specimens, and yet, in all weathers and under all adverse conditions, such midwives will be found cheerfully and heroically doing their work, taking thought for their patients always, and for themselves not at all, their reward in hard cash being the merest pittance, in hard work as much as they can get through, to which must be added the confidence, and, in many instances, the gratitude of their patients. They, at least, realise that day and night a midwife is never certain of, and seldom gets, a whole night in bed. She is at their service, and they would consider it an insult to question her soberness, at any hour of the twenty-four. As soon would they expect to send for their clergyman and find him the worse for drink.

In the name of a most hard-worked and responsible body of women I protest against the ignorant permission given to us to "drink ourselves stupid" between our cases. We have not asked for it, and consider it a gratuitous insult.

Yours obediently,
CERTIFIED MIDWIFE.

THE SCOPE OF THE DISTRICT NURSE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I notice that you often lay stress in your valuable paper upon the importance of a district nurse's moral influence if she sets herself

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