

work in the late war, both as First Aiders and nurses, therefore showing that our noble band of doctors *did* give First Aid and also nursing lectures in a most perfect manner. Both the men and Nursing Sisters have the same lectures, and by the same lecturers. I am sure the trained nurses could not possibly give the lectures so well as our doctors, and am sure they would not have such good results from their classes. I would invite those who do not think our doctors are able to give the lectures to visit some of the open spaces on Bank Holidays, and the exhibitions, and see the work the members of the Brigade do; they would then find the results of the doctors' lectures were very good indeed.

I am sorry to trouble you with such a long letter, but could not let this matter pass without letting you know all our doctors are good lecturers.

I remain, yours truly,

ELIZABETH BRUNNING,  
Second Nursing Officer of Nursing  
Division, St. John Ambulance  
Brigade.

Beckenham, S.E.

[Our correspondent is not a trained nurse, so that her point of view is not strictly a professional one.—Ed.]

#### A GRAVE INJUSTICE.

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

MADAM,—Will you allow me to call attention to a proposed grave injustice to thousands of poor women? At present, when a woman in her hour of trial is attended by a midwife, the midwife is required by Statute to summon a doctor if any complication ensues. No provision is at present made for the payment of the doctor whom the State, not the patient, insists on summoning. This is an injustice to the doctor.

Now, the Government proposes (in the Bill just introduced by Lord Wolverhampton) to require the Board of Guardians to pay the fee (as parochial relief to the woman and her husband). This is a grave injustice to these poor families. The woman and her husband are not paupers—they are not even destitute persons. Through the exercise of thrift they have made for themselves the normal provision for childbirth of their class, *i.e.*, a midwife. The Government proposes to make them compulsorily into paupers (even if they subsequently repay the full amount it makes no difference in this respect); their homes will be visited by the Relieving Officer with his hated enquiries, often to the detriment (as any nurse or midwife will testify) of the woman's health; they will be liable to be proceeded against by the Board of Guardians, if (as is intended by Clause 17, sub-clause 2), the "relief" is given "on loan," and compelled to repay a charge which they have never incurred, but which the State, in the public interest, has chosen to require.

I cannot believe that the House of Lords will choose this moment to thrust thousands of poor women involuntarily into pauperism; or that the House of Commons will think of tolerating such an injustice.

When the police call a doctor to attend to a patient in an emergency, the fee is paid out of the

municipal funds, and the patient is not thereby made a pauper. The Town Councils of Manchester and Liverpool are already, with the knowledge and consent of the Local Government Board, following a similar course with regard to the doctors called in by the midwives; and this course is open to any other sanitary authority (under section 133 of the Public Health Act). There is accordingly no need for the degrading and insulting Clause 17 of Lord Wolverhampton's Bill; and I hope that the Government will withdraw it.

I am, etc.,

BEATRICE WEBB.  
(Mrs. Sidney Webb)

41, Grosvenor Road, S.W.;

#### LIPS SHOULD BE SEALED.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I was very much interested in your Editorial of a week ago, entitled "A Question of Honour." I have had a great deal to do with nurses in one way or another for many years. One does not like to discuss the failings of such a splendid band of women as they are, but I must say that the way many of them talk and write about their patients is unpardonable. Not only do they entertain (?) one patient with the story of the illnesses and weaknesses of others, but they write to their own people letters detailing the faults (as they consider them) of the patient whom they are nursing, and the patient's friends. One nurse said to me: "Surely one can write what one likes to one's mother." My answer was: "What would be thought of a doctor who gave his mother, or relatives, details of his patients by name?"

One cannot understand how *ladies* can be led into such a grave fault, but I believe the fact is that many nurses do not distinguish between the personal and the professional. One can write what one likes of *personal* things to mother or best beloved friend, but on professional matters lips should be sealed.

I believe nurses have only to realise this to correct a failing which is talked of a good deal among all classes of patients.

Yours sincerely,

A LOVER OF NURSES.

[We regret that pressure on our space compels us to hold over other interesting letters.—Ed.]

#### Comments and Replies.

Sister E. Tompkins, North Ormesby.—We feel sure that if you call at the Policlinico Hospital, Rome, and ask for the Matron, Miss Dorothy Snell, presenting your card, she will be pleased to show you the hospital.

Miss van Lanschot Hubrecht, Holland.—"The School Child" may be obtained from the Editor, 67, Belsize Park Gardens, London, N.W., price 1s. per annum, postage extra.

#### Notice.

##### OUR PUZZLE PRIZE.

Rules for competing for the Pictorial Puzzle Prize will be found on Advertisement page xii.

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