

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.

CROSS INFECTION IN HOSPITAL.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—My attention has been drawn to a paragraph in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING for May 11th, 1912. Under the heading "Hospital Disorganization," it is suggested that lack of "nursing supervision" is the cause of a state of affairs described in the annual report made by Dr. C. H. Phillips, Medical Superintendent of Bucknall Hospital, Stoke-on-Trent.

Being deeply interested, and having made a careful study of that report, I fail to discover any grounds on which such a suggestion could be made.

Dr. Phillips himself is indignant that such an interpretation should be placed on words of his.

The facts are these. In pre-federation days this hospital served a district consisting of four towns and one rural district. Since federation—March 31st, 1910—two more towns have been added (with a population of 60,000). At the same time scarlatina has been prevalent in epidemic form in the Potteries, and, in Dr. Phillips' words, "the work has almost doubled, and the accommodation for staff and patients remains the same." The wards built for, and, according to Local Government Board requirements, with air space for 81 patients, now contain 172 beds.

To those experienced in fever hospital administration I think the above facts, together with some others mentioned in the report with which I have no concern, will explain—I again quote Dr. Phillips—"how necessary the extensions are at the hospital," and that the overcrowding and lack of isolation accommodation are jointly responsible for the troubles we have had, viz., cross infection, and sickness amongst the staff. Considerable extensions are already in progress, and I trust the day is not far distant when the people of the Potteries will have cause to be proud of their fever hospital.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

IRENE WEBB, Matron.

Bucknall Hospital,
Stoke-on-Trent.

[In commenting upon a report presented by Dr. Phillips to the Stoke Joint Hospital Board last week we expressed the opinion that "nursing supervision appears to be the remedy for much of the disorganization"; a better word, and what we had in mind, was "nursing inspection." We had no intention of reflecting upon the work of the matron. We feel sure that if all isolation hospitals were systematically inspected by Government Nursing Inspectors such a report as that

to which we allude would be rendered impossible and the matrons of such institutions would be spared much terrible anxiety. Dr. Phillips stated that a number of persons stated to be suffering from scarlatina never had the disease at all, and others contracted it after admittance to hospital. Nine scarlatina patients contracted diphtheria, and two died. Twenty-one persons admitted as diphtheria patients contracted scarlatina from patients sent into the diphtheria ward in mistake, and fifteen persons admitted as scarlatina patients were found to be suffering from chicken-pox. Owing to want of room, sixteen other patients contracted chicken-pox from them. Four members of the staff contracted scarlatina, eight diphtheria, and four enteric fever. By such a condition of affairs the lives of the patients and staff are risked, and they are the only persons concerned to whom indignation is permissible.—ED.]

THE EXCLUSION OF TRAINED NURSES FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Your leader last week was read in Ireland with interest, as the Irish Nurses' Association has also been denied representation on the Irish Advisory Committee by the Commissioners in Dublin. Our deputation was informed, in fact, that as trained nurses would "receive benefits" under the Act it was absurd that they should be represented on the Committee! Why? An advisory committee is to advise, not to administer, and who but experts can advise on nursing matters? The medical profession and midwives are to have expert opinion represented on the Committee, but not the highly qualified profession of nursing. It is time, as you say, that we knew the reason of our exclusion. Personally, I am of opinion that the Commissioners mean to provide cheap contract nursing, mixed up with midwifery; if so, it is to be hoped that, as the profession is unjustly excluded from an expression of opinion by the Commissioners, that the Press will take up our case. We all detest this ill-digested Act, many intend to resist it, and our treatment by the Commissioners justifies such action.

Yours,

"WIGS ON THE GREEN."

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Miss Evans, Birmingham.—You refer, no doubt, to the "mixer," supplied by Horlick's Malted Milk Co., Slough, Bucks, for combining their excellent preparation with water. It can be obtained through any chemist locally; or direct from the Company, price 6d.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS FOR MAY.

May 25th.—What meals should be served in hospital wards daily; how, so that they reach the patient in an appetising form?

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