

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.

AN ANSWER.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—In reply to Miss Bielby's question "Is bi-carbonate of soda an advisable remedy for the pain of indigestion?" may I suggest that if it can be proved that the pain is caused by excess of hydrochloric acid then sodii bicarb. which neutralises the acid is an advisable remedy.

On the other hand, if the cause of the indigestion is gallstones, gastric ulcer, appendicitis, or duodenal ulcer, then sodii bicarb. is not advisable, because though it relieves the pain it disguises the symptoms. I should like to point out that another very common remedy for indigestion namely that of sipping very hot water half an hour before a meal is most injurious and a frequent cause of gastric ulcer.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

MAY D. HUNTER.

THE NEED OF TRAINED WOMEN NURSES
IN RED CROSS HOSPITALS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Your editorial in the issue of July 26th on the "Need of Trained Women Nurses in Red Cross Hospitals" shows once more the urgent need of drastic reform in the organisation and methods of the British Red Cross Society.

Apparently they do not "make haste" even slowly, for I was told at the office when I enquired at the outbreak of the war in the Balkans whether trained nurses were to be sent out, that "Sir Frederick Treves did not consider the conditions at the seat of war fit for women nurses."

It was also suggested that this was the conclusion he had arrived at after his experience in South Africa. I pointed out that if all the nurses had been selected by experienced matrons there would have been fewer complaints. I wonder if a delegate from the British Red Cross Society was sent to the International Congress of Red Cross Societies in America last year? If so, surely he must have heard of the splendid organisation of Red Cross Nurses which exists there, consisting of a body of over 3,000 thoroughly trained nurses enrolled for Red Cross work under the direction of trained superintendents, the Chief Superintendent being officially connected with the head office at Washington.

When any need arises, through flood, fire, earthquake or any other disaster, or even for street ambulance work, a band of these skilled women is ready to proceed to the spot and give their skilled services to the sick and suffering.

Anyone reading the accounts of the work done by the American Red Cross Nurses during the recent floods in Dayton, Ohio, can appreciate that trained workers are the best workers under all circumstances, and not only as Sir F. Treves seems to imply, under smooth and comfortable conditions. What is needed is, as you suggest, experienced matrons on the committee, or a Committee of Matrons to enroll trained nurses during peace for service where and when needed, and to organise the nursing departments on active service. If this were done the sick would be better cared for at far less expenditure of life, health, money and material. I hope the many subscribers of the thousands of pounds will, if they read of the unsatisfactory expenditure of their money, remonstrate with the Committee, who, whilst promising nursing for the sick and wounded, sent out no nurses, or practically none, for what are a dozen when the need is so great?

Unfortunately, the British Red Cross Society is controlled chiefly by men who, however much they may know about war, are certainly not experts in the art of nursing, and, presumably, so long as women are not recognised as citizens, but only as a means of supply, so long will this and other doors remain closed to them, regardless of human suffering and misery.

If women would refuse to contribute to all societies who exclude expert women from their controlling bodies it is possible that societies dealing with the sick might awake to the fact that neither lay women nor medical men are trained nurses, much as they like to pose as such where money and power are in question.

Yours truly,

MARY BURR.

Le Prévoux, Switzerland.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

August 30th.—What is the most urgent emergency with which you have had to deal, and how did you meet it?

September 6th.—Describe your method of caring for rubber gloves, including their sterilization, the discovery of holes, and their repair.

STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

Full information as to the movement for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and application forms for joining the Society can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.

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