

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.

PROFESSIONAL CONSCIENCE MUST ACT.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—I see in your issue of last week that the British Red Cross Society recently attempted to terminate the engagement of their nurses serving in France, with option of re-engagement at half their original salary, in spite of a six months' contract under which they believed themselves to be legally protected; and further, that although for the moment this attempt failed, the Society has actually succeeded in reducing the salaries of nurses at home to £1 a week.

Beyond an extract in the *Evening Standard* of January 8th, I have seen no mention of this matter in the daily press, though of course there may have been such. Certainly there has been no public agitation on the subject. If, as may well be the case, the nurses are too busy and too tired to fight for themselves, cannot someone of influence in the medical world take up the cudgels on their behalf? Obviously it is not only to their own interest but to that of the general public that fully qualified nurses in charge of our wounded soldiers should be properly paid, justly treated, and protected by genuine contracts.

The public has recently subscribed enormous sums to the Red Cross Society, and in spite of their often deplorable indifference as to the way in which their money is expended, I can hardly suppose they would tolerate such meanness to brave and skilled women if the above facts were brought home to them.

Faithfully yours,

WINIFRED HOLIDAY.

[Trained nurses in England have as a body shown a deplorable lack of *esprit de corps* and have failed to co-operate for the uplift of their professional status. They are therefore the sport of any employer who chooses to treat them ungenerously. We hope injustice may arouse a sense of professional conscience throughout their ranks. No one can help a body of workers unless their own conscience inspires public-spirited action.—ED.]

A FALSE POSITION.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I know several matrons who prefer the untrained V.A.D.'s, to trained nurses—so do the doctors. But it does not alter the fact that it is most unprofessional for a matron to place herself under the authority of a young untrained Commandant, or Lady Superintendent. The experience at Southend is by no means unique. I have refused to be placed in so false a position, and much regret so many of my colleagues have submitted so tamely to these wrong conditions.

RANK AND FILE.

THE BURDEN OF MATERNITY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Those who have worked as midwives among the poor and know how heavily the stress and strain of motherhood bears upon the working-class woman will be glad indeed to learn that at last there is some glimmering of light as to her importance in the body politic, and the necessity on national, if not humanitarian, grounds, for conserving her health.

At all time a large number of the working classes are underfed, not only because in some instances, no doubt, the women are bad managers, but also because the wages earned by the head of the family are not sufficient to provide the necessary amount of food to really satisfy the healthy appetites of a growing family. The person who suffers most is usually the wife and mother. She endeavours to feed her husband as well as her limited means will afford. Does not the well-being of the whole family depend on the conservation of his health? She cannot see her children hungry without trying to give them something, and so it too often happens that she stints herself, and goes short when it is of the utmost importance that her own strength and that of her unborn child should be maintained. It is not thus that hardy men, strong to defend the Empire, are bred.

If this war has the result of creating an increased appreciation of the value of the lives of the mothers of the nation, and of lightening the burden they bear so uncomplainingly; it will be a silver lining to the blackest war cloud which has ever darkened the world.

I am, yours faithfully,

CERT. MIDWIFE.

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Miss M. Barlow, Birmingham.—We should advise you to enter a hospital for the full term of training. Only those who have the skill gained by previous training and experience are qualified to nurse the sick and wounded.

Mrs. J., London.—Opium can no longer be obtained promiscuously from a chemist, but must be signed for and only supplied to persons of whose *bona-fides* the vendor is satisfied. Its pre-eminent influence is upon the brain. Children and old people bear it badly, and women are more susceptible to its action than men.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

January 30th.—Mention the most delectable drinks for invalids, and how to make them.

February 7th.—What precautions would you take in the care of an enteric patient to protect yourself and others from infection?

OUR ADVERTISERS.

We would remind our readers that they can help THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING by dealing as far as possible with advertisers in the paper, and getting their friends to do likewise. Only the most reliable firms are accepted by the management.

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