

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.

THE SPIRIT OF RESPONSIBILITY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—You have from time to time invited your readers to correspond or rather encouraged members to take advantage of the Journal's columns, in which to express their opinions. Therefore might I ask you to insert the following:—

Is the spirit of responsibility deteriorating in the trained nurse of to-day, and if so, why?

I have been in close association with our profession now for the past eighteen years, and I cannot hesitate to say that there has been, in my humble opinion, a marked deterioration in the conscientiousness of carrying out "duty" in trained nurses within the last five or six years. Some will at once answer: "Oh! it is just the spirit of the age." If so, no such spirit should ever be allowed to enter into a profession such as ours; there is not and never should be any room for it.

I was told, about four months ago, by one of the leading surgeons in the North of England, who has been examiner of nurses in one of our largest training schools there for many years, that the material is at fault, that they cannot get the right class of girl to go in for her training now, and that the ones who do go are not sufficiently educated. This opinion was re-echoed to me only a few days ago by the Matron of one of our South county hospitals. It is, I believe, in a great many instances true, but extra patience and pains in the training can rectify this to a great extent, yet to my mind, it is not in them that our chief danger lies. I have purposely mixed in certain circles of fully trained certificated women of various schools, and this is what I find: there is, unfortunately, a spirit among a certain number who think themselves not only highly educated but polished women of the community, yet who have not sufficient intelligence to carry out their professional duties without continual breaches of regularity, and what is far more serious, criticisms of those in authority over them, also a great tendency to try to spread a spirit of discontent amongst contemporaries and juniors—in one word, Agitators!

This surely should never be; they sometimes cloak it in "Taking an intelligent interest" in either the work, housing, catering or in fact the general management of the institution, of which they are *not* put in charge and therefore are not held responsible for.

If this is true, and I fear many of our readers must find it is, surely it can and should be remedied.

We all want State Registration, and rightly so, but we who really want it, want a band of registered women who at all times and under all circumstances will conscientiously adhere strictly to duty and discipline. Members who are willing to obey implicitly the heads of all the different branches.

If only we would all remember from whence authority comes, and that it is of Divine origin, this in itself should aid in helping to rectify deficiencies, also try to keep before us that it is far easier to obey than to command and that in obeying we aid tremendously those at the head of affairs, if, individually we would carry out faithfully the trust they have put upon us, resting assured if we are needed at the head, we shall be called there.

Yours faithfully,
A TRAINED NURSE.

INTRA UTERINE MANIPULATIONS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I fully endorse the opinion of your correspondent as to the desirability of a further examination for midwives who so desire it, after a course of practical instruction in emergency manipulations. I would have the examination fairly stiff, not in text book knowledge, but in practical work conducted in the labour wards of maternity hospitals. A midwife cannot know too much, though she may do too much, but the more she knows the less likelihood there will be of her assuming the rôle of the medical practitioner. It is a little knowledge which is a dangerous thing.

Yours faithfully,
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS A MIDWIFE.

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Sister (Paris).—The book you mean is the "Hospital Handbook in English and French," by H. Meugens, for use at the Front. It is published by Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Ltd., 4, Stationers' Hall Court, E.C., price 1s. net; and obtainable in France from Merridew, 60, Rue Victor Hugo, Boulogne; Galignani, 224, Rue de Rivoli, Paris; and Brentano, 37, Avenue de L'Opéra, Paris.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

August 21st.—What is Anthrax? State details of nursing.

August 28th.—Describe the most practical and aseptic indoor uniform for War nursing.

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