

## 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,—May I say that I think it is impossible to generalise as to the spirit of responsibility, but it does not seem to me that deteriorate is in any case the right word to apply to it. It is a quality which is either present or absent, but I fail to understand how it can deteriorate. I agree with your correspondent "A Trained Nurse," that it is not characteristic of any one class. It may be lacking in an educated woman, and strongly developed in an uneducated one. Where I differ from her is that it appears to me—I may be wrong—that she is arguing for blind unreasoning "loyalty" and to my thinking loyalty founded on conviction, and on belief in the just rule of a superior officer is the only loyalty worth having. I have the reputation of being a loyal worker, but I would never remain in an institution where I did not respect the powers that be. Therefore I can conscientiously uphold authority. That to me is the secret of loyalty, not blind obedience.

Yours faithfully,

TEN YEARS A NURSE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I am sorry that "A Trained Nurse" regards my friendly comments as strictures. But at least she endorses my proposition that "the doctrine of non-responsibility may be carried too far," so we have a point of agreement.

Yours faithfully,

CONSCIENCE.

## ECONOMY WITH EFFICIENCY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—When the spirit of economy is or should be pervading all classes of individuals, it behoves nurses in hospitals and other institutions to see to it that, as far as they are themselves responsible, nothing in the shape of waste or extravagance is allowed. Every penny saved in the present serious condition of finance is a penny gained for the State.

The "spirit of responsibility" if it exists will nowhere be more apparent than in a nurse who conscientiously deals with public money as if it were her own. I fully believe that an enormous saving for the commonwealth could be effected in small economies by sisters and nurses who are restricted to ward management. For example, in the use of bandages and dressings, in the number of articles sent to the laundry, there is too often an unnecessary lavishness far in excess of what is needed for efficiency. Again in requisites for cleaning and polishing, some reduction in quantity

or quality could be made, and the addition of a little extra elbow grease be the contribution of the women who stay at home. Perhaps the rate-supported institutions are the worst offenders in the matter of personal self-indulgence. I have seen in one institution large fires in officials' sitting rooms in July with coals at war prices. Such an extravagance in their own homes would not have been dreamed of. Coal and gas in the ensuing winter will be frightful items in institutional expenses, and it is in this direction that substantial saving may be effected. There are many obvious and efficacious ways of regulating extravagance in these items, and those responsible should see to it that they are carried out.

On all sides we are hearing of the gravity of the financial outlook. We as members of the nursing fraternity can and ought to do "our bit" in helping to ease the situation. Economy with Efficiency should be our motto.

Yours faithfully,

"THE WOMAN WHO STAYED  
AT HOME."

## AN INTERESTING POINT.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Dr. Gwynne Maitland's account of the Serbian outbreak of typhus was most interesting, especially to those who, like myself, have never seen a case. A lady, now ninety, told me she had typhus when she was a girl of fifteen, and her sister also, who died. In a very long convalescence the tongue remained quite black, and rather dry. Each morning she looked at her tongue in the glass, wishing it would come right. One day, after many weeks, a thin red line appeared on one side of the tongue. It quickly widened, and in twenty-four hours the tongue was normal, and she said it was such a joy to see a nice bright red tongue again that she often ran to the glass to be sure it was still red. She never forgot it.

Yours faithfully,

E. E. P.

## REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. M. C.—The National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland is formed of self-governing societies of nurses which have entered into affiliation with it, such as the Matrons' Council, the Society for the State Registration of Nurses, a number of the Nurses' Leagues, &c. If, therefore, you are a member of any of these societies you are a member of the National Council.

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

September 11th.—What precautions would you take to prevent the spread of enteric fever in a house where a case has occurred? In what various ways may the patient have contracted the disease?

September 18th.—What practical suggestions can you make for checking waste, or effecting economies, in hospital and poor law infirmary administration?

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