

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 OFFENDING CLAUSE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—All Military Matrons are not so devoid of justice as the two consulted by "A Poverty Stricken Person." I consulted our Matron on the "Offending Clause," and her reply was, "I cannot advise you on this matter as it is approved by our superior officers but I would thrust my own hand in the fire, like Cranmer, before I would sign it." That was good enough advice for me. I think "Justice," on April 14th, makes an excellent suggestion, "Why not a Court of Inquiry for Nurses?" As she says, all other members of His Majesty's Forces may claim a Court Martial. Why are we nurses alone to be treated as if we had no human rights? I hope more will be heard of this matter. Thanking you for making it public,

I am, yours sincerely,

A MEMBER QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S
IMPERIAL MILITARY NURSING RESERVE.

"THE MYSTERIOUS PACT."

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—As the title and constitution of the Royal British Nurses' Association become merged in the Royal British College of Nursing, if the Supplemental Charter is granted, and there will then be no members of the R.B.N.A., how can it be "understood" as provided in clause 5 of Mr. Sydney Pitt's letter to the College of Nursing, Ltd., "that one-third of the Members of the first Council elected under the Bye-laws, and one-third of the Members of the Amalgamated Body who may represent it on the Council under the proposed Bill for Registration of Nurses, shall be members of the Royal British Nurses' Association?" As by the time these Councils are formed the R.B.N.A. will be past and gone so far as membership is concerned, how is this provision to be carried out? It can only mean that the persons—the Hon. Officers, &c.—who have been placed on the nominated Council insist upon being retained on it. Then how about an elected self-governing Body, promised to the Nurse Members? It is all too difficult for me.

Yours truly,

LIFE MEMBER R.B.N.A.

[Under the Supplemental Charter Nursing cannot be elevated into a Profession. It will be a domestic avocation controlled by employers. Trained Nurses must therefore fight with the utmost courage and tenacity for a Bill to organise their highly-skilled and scientific work on a professional basis. This is what we have been working for for half a lifetime.—ED.]

THE SHORTAGE OF V.A.D.'S.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I have been a "V.A.D." now worn out like an old shoe; there is no more use for me in a military hospital. Perhaps my experience is like that of others, and may have something to do with the shortage of these workers. The truth is we were greatly misled by our training before the war, which was in First Aid and Home Nursing from Lectures and Books, and naturally when we were mobilised we expected to nurse sick and wounded soldiers, instead of which I for one was deputed to domestic duties only, cleaning, washing-up, running messages, Jack-of-all-trades—and it was too much for me beginning at thirty-eight to do work young probationers of a more robust class have to do at twenty-one. I know you disapprove of the Nursing Organisation of V.A. Detachments, and I agree with you that had our service been properly organised by trained Superintendents instead of men and women of the leisured class we should have been trained for probationers' duties, known what hospital discipline meant, and should have been treated very differently in hospitals. In one we were harried all the time, and made to realise our "absurd ambitions," in an otherwe were "kowitzed" to because it was thought "canny" to keep in with influential people, no knowing what "honours" were coming along! Both attitudes were wrong. I have worked under both *régimes* and found them equally worrying.

In spite of everything, I sympathise with the rank and file of the nurses. As one told me, "I have done four years 'hard' for my Certificate and could not afford to break down. What do you think of these flappers?" And indeed it was a marvel how she kept going on such flat feet.

"A new generation of nurses are not going to do four years hard labour," she told me, "if as our senior surgeon has reported from the Front, 'an untrained V.A.D. is equally expert in the wards and theatre,' it either means that gentleman does not know what trained nursing is, or we are being exploited by the Training Schools in a very unscrupulous manner. We shall have to know which after the war."

My plea is for professional teaching, control, and supervision under the Red Cross in Britain as it is in the United States.

Yours truly,

AN OLD SHOE.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

QUESTIONS.

May 5th.—Name some diseases that may be caused by the following errors in diet; (a) insufficient food, (b) lack of fresh food, (c) overeating, (d) improperly balanced diet.

May 12th.—Differentiate between (a) communicable, (b) contagious, and (c) infectious diseases, and give an example of each.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)