

## 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.*

### WHY THE TRUTH SHOULD BE TOLD.

*To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.*

DEAR MADAM,—In this life, for every sin some one has to pay. Very often it is the innocent, not the guilty, who pay; for instance, the immoral man acquires a loathsome disease and infects his wife—she has to pay; if she has a child, he also pays. The man pays, too, but not as heavily as do his wife and child. Unfortunately, other people sometimes have to pay too, of which the following is an example. A man I know, who has always been considered a model of all the virtues, infected his wife; and when her child was born, she was very ill, the child had ophthalmia, and, later on, skin trouble.

Rightly or wrongly—it is not easy to say which—her doctor said it could do no good and might do great harm if she were told who and what was the cause of all this suffering; but he did not take into account the fact that most people nowadays have a considerable amount of medical knowledge. She and all her relations and friends knew that something was wrong and therefore someone was to blame, and the one they blamed was the nurse.

They published far and wide that, owing to the nurse's negligence, the mother had nearly lost her life and the child his sight, so that nurse had to pay.

Never again would any of these people have a nurse from the society to which this nurse belonged, and so the society had to pay. At least three people and one society had to pay for one man's sin.

Why should the nurse pay? This man was nothing to her; if she had been asked to take the blame to save her patient from mental agony as well as physical, it is just possible that she might have agreed to sacrifice herself, but she was not asked; she, a working woman with nothing between her and destitution but her profession, was made the scapegoat for a man who was not manly enough to live a clean life, and, having sinned, was mean enough to keep silent when a woman was blamed for the result of his sin.

This "conspiracy of silence" has had a long innings, and if it is to go on, to save the feelings of the victims, the doctor in charge of the case should see that the nurse does not suffer; if he cannot tell the patient the truth, he must tell her something, and it must be plausible enough to satisfy the most inquisitive of her friends. It is of no use to say, as was said in this case, "This sort of thing does happen sometimes, we cannot say why." She must be told more than that; the woman of to-day is not a child, she will know

the why and wherefore, and if she is not told she will draw her own conclusions. She may even blame the doctor instead of the nurse, or she may one day learn the truth.

M. H.

### THE REMUNERATION OF MIDWIVES.

*To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.*

DEAR MADAM,—I am very glad to see that Dr. Janet Lane-Clayton has given some consideration to the economic position of midwives. The average remuneration of midwives, having regard to the responsibilities placed upon them, the very onerous work demanded of them, the effect upon their health of the irregular night and day work, and the out-of-pocket expenses which they incur, is iniquitous, and the result is evident and inevitable—a serious shortage of midwives, and, as Dr. Lane-Clayton points out, "the present arduous conditions tend to lower not only the number of women in practice, but also the type of woman who is willing to undertake the work." Personally I should like to see the municipal midwives appointed with a definite status, and salaries upon which it is possible to live in moderate comfort. I am a whole-hearted believer in the value of midwives' work for the community and consider them more than entitled to a living wage.

Yours faithfully,

RETIRED.

### NURSES' PETITION TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

All certificated nurses in favour of direct representation on the Provisional Nursing Council set up in a Nurses' Registration Act to make the rules and regulations to which registered nurses have to conform, should sign the Petition to the Prime Minister promoted by the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses. Forms free from the Petition Secretary, 431, Oxford Street, London, W. 1.

### OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

#### QUESTION.

*August 18th.*—What are the chief causes of rickets? What are its prominent symptoms, and how can a district nurse aid in its prevention?

*August 25th.*—How does puerperal septicæmia arise? Describe the course and management of the disease.

### HOW TO HELP THE B.J.N.

1. Get new subscribers.
2. Send news and marked newspapers.
3. Secure new advertisers.
4. Read the advertisements.
5. Patronise the advertisers.
6. Tell the advertisers where you saw the advertisement.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)