

## 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.*

## CONGRATULATIONS FROM HOLLAND.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR EDITOR,—Our papers tell us that at last the English women have got the Vote. What a splendid victory after such a long and painful struggle! Accept my heartiest congratulations for you and all the nurses. I feel assured it will make the passing of the Bill of the Central Committee more easy. I am following your fight against the College of Nursing with the greatest interest and sympathy, and send you my best wishes. I hope our men will soon follow the good example given them in these last years by Denmark and England, and give us our rights.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

JEANNE C. VAN LANSCHOT HUBRECHT  
(Late President Dutch Nurses' Association),  
Noordwyk, Holland.

## WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE BEST MEANS FOR INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF PRACTISING MIDWIVES?

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—As I read in last week's JOURNAL that there were no adequate replies to the above question, I am sending you a letter on one aspect of the subject, thinking it may open out some useful discussion on the subject.

The question is concerning the supply of "practising" midwives, and from that arises another question, who are those midwives mainly recruited from who do not practise after going through the short, but certainly arduous training, to become one? Well, we are told that there are about 40,000 names on the Roll, and of these only 14,000 are practising midwives. From what class of woman does the leakage take place? From the untrained and ignorant, or from those who have previously spent three or more years in hospital to qualify themselves for nursing sickness of every form?

I think it will be found that the latter are the ones who do not follow on with midwifery, not because they are uninterested in their fellow women, or because it is "a nasty, dirty work," but because the advantages are so few, and the drawbacks and disabilities so great. Now, here someone might say is that not the same for all, but I take it, not so. Is it not fair to expect that a trained nurse will be treated on a different footing by the Central Midwives Board, the Profession, the M.O.H., the Health Visitor, from one who has no other fitness for the work (except it may be of personality, which is undoubtedly a

great consideration), but no other training than the compulsory six months, or less, when she puts in all her cases and learns all her nursing?

I would in no way minimise the good done by the midwives, who are not nurses, but we are enquiring as to the shortage, and leakage, and the way to increase the supply of practising midwives, and I believe one way would be to improve the status of the Trained Nurse Midwife by recognizing her qualifications as being above the untrained, and treating her accordingly.

Why should she be inspected, in some cases by a Health Visitor, who is not even a Nurse and whose sole knowledge of midwifery is comprised in the few months' compulsory work necessary for a certificate?

Why do some Doctors apparently prefer the *bona fides* even to the trained nurse?

Why should not a minimum year's training in general nursing be made a *sine qua non* before becoming eligible for a C.M.B. certificate?

Why should there not be a Senior Course open to Trained Nurses when they would be taught to turn the child, stitch the perineum, &c.?

These are some of the many questions that come to one on this subject, for surely, if, as we all feel, the Mothers and Babies are of paramount value in these days, it is of vast importance to prevent the nurses, who by their previous training have imbibed the principles of asepsis, until its practice has become second nature, from leaving our ranks "as working partners" altogether.

TRAINED NURSE AND MIDWIFE.

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

## QUESTIONS.

July 21st.—Give a brief description of the spinal cord. What are its functions?

July 28th.—(a) What symptoms may be found in an infant who is suffering from congenital syphilis? (b) What symptoms may develop in a new-born infant if the mother is suffering from gonorrhoea?

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