

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.

ARE MIDWIVES TRAINED NURSES?

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Miss Emily O'Neill, in your issue of the 29th ult. asks "If midwives are not nurses, what are they?" Obviously they are midwives! Your correspondent must have a very inadequate idea of what constitutes a trained nurse if she considers that it suffices for a woman to have conformed to the requirements of the Central Midwives' Board, and "nursed twenty lying-in women and their infants during the ten days following labour," in order to be a trained nurse. Such nursing is limited to the care of the puerpera (in most instances a healthy person, recuperating after a normal labour), and the management (including the feeding) of infants, for the most part normal and healthy. She must also know how to deal with obstetric emergencies, be acquainted with the nature, causes and symptoms of puerperal fevers, and the signs and symptoms of the venereal diseases, though she need not have nursed them, and understand how to disinfect her person, clothing, appliances. That very elementary, and circumscribed knowledge, relating to mothers and babies, does not constitute a woman a trained nurse. The midwife has her own honourable status, and position in the body politic, defined in the Midwives' Act. She should be proud of it, and seek still further to enhance its dignity. The trained nurse at present has no such assured position. Let us hope that the Bill now before Parliament for the Registration of Nurses will shortly become law, and that the General Nursing Council will soon get to work to define the standard to be required of registered nurses.

Yours faithfully,

CERTIFICATED NURSE AND CERTIFIED MIDWIFE.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

M. S. Thompson: "I called for three cheers for Dr. Addison at dinner to-day, as soon as we heard that he had guided our Bill through the Third Reading in the Commons. It was a great triumph for all concerned, and I only hope we nurses will take a much more personal interest in the status and progress of our profession in the future than we have done, as a profession, in the past. Cheerio! B.J.N.! Steadfast and true from start to finish."

H. Hawkins: "What a Christmas Box."

C.M.B.: "My BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING gets passed on to three other people, as it is far too good to keep to myself; but I do wish, as is suggested, all nurses would ignore and cease to support the lay-edited nursing papers."

Matron Mental Hospital: It seems extraordinary that Sir Watson Cheyne—a medical man—knows no more about mental nurses, than to imagine they do not exist. Year by year, mental nursing has been raised to a higher standard, and the aim now, in all well-managed asylums (mental hospitals as we now call them) is to teach that brain disease needs scientific nursing—just as all other diseases do—and that in many instances it responds to skilled treatment and nursing. We mental nurses owe the Central Committee a debt of gratitude, in that it kept in its Bill from start to finish, the need of a Mental Nurses' Supplementary Register, and I for one much regret our Asylum Workers' Association failed to affiliate with the Central Committee, and help it to protect our interests. Now, when the battle is won, a movement is being made to secure representation on the General Nursing Council."

[Better late than never. Mental Nursing wisely guided has a great future before it, and we hope both the Medico-Psychological Association—which has done much to raise the standard of mental nurses—and women mental nurses, will be represented by experts on the General Nursing Council. There will be plenty of work for them to do once the Council is formed.—ED.]

Trade Union Nurse: "The attacks in the employers' press on the organizers of our Professional Union are perfectly scandalous; but it serves us right for supporting these quack publications for so long. No *trained* nurse should pay a penny for so-called nursing journals, unless they are owned and edited by *trained* nurses. Fancy the medical profession recognising as medical opinions lay-edited publications. All these people are after is our money, which gives them the power to insult and suppress us. Let us unite to smash up this tyranny. It is the biggest danger to freedom we are up against."

Member of League: "Our President objects to us discussing registration Bills at our meetings. She says it is political and politics are not seemly at our gatherings. Why?"

[Presumably because her professional policy differs from those members who wish to take an intelligent interest in their own affairs. The old Greek view was that politics, rightly regarded, are the highest activity of the free man, and we claim of the free woman too.—ED.]

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

QUESTIONS.

December 13th.—What is meant by "Barrier Nursing"? What are the necessary details to be carried out in "Cubicle Nursing"?

December 20th.—What is the origin of quinsy, and how is it treated?

December 27th.—Describe the appearance of the skin in (a) eczema, (b) psoriasis, (c) ringworm, (d), lupus. How are these diseases treated?

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