

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.

A NATIONAL DANGER.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Freedom, Conscientious Objectors, are words which figure largely in the present day. Freedom, however, becomes licence when it encroaches on another's liberty or safety. The more civilised we become the greater the need for protecting laws.

The law regulating Vaccination of infants is too easily evaded—there are too many ignorant folk claiming exemption and too many people ready to sign their claims. Would that they followed the example set by a Scottish J.P., who tells the fathers "to begone and not pit their knowledge against considered medical opinion"!

A serious duty devolves on Health Visitors, and very many of them use their influence to promote Vaccination and preach the evils of neglect, but Health Visitors alone cannot tackle the task, it is for the Ministry of Health to take steps to see that the people are educated to the necessity for Vaccination.

We are a Maritime Country, and few cities have not some connection with the docks, yet it was computed lately that in Greenwich about 25 per cent of the people were unvaccinated. Will it require an extensive outbreak of Smallpox to rouse the authorities? There was good warning in the recent Glasgow outbreak!

In Germany where Vaccination is compulsory Smallpox is unknown. In Poland during German occupation their most stringent regulations were enforced—each adult had to be vaccinated yearly and have his medical card stamped, while children were required to show marks on both arms before they were very old. When the Germans departed the Polish authorities saw the wisdom of retaining in force their arbitrary health laws—owing to the unsettled state of the country.

We do not allow people to exercise their conscience in the buying and selling of poison, then why in this equally important matter?

In visiting, one notes in almost all cases the parent who has least to do with the child—the father—is the objector; and very often his objection is the pain caused to the child by its *inflamed* limb. He is ignorant, or regardless of the risk to his child by exemption and of the risk to the community, and, last but not least, the public expense when cases of smallpox occur. He quotes family history where the vaccinated members have all "ailed," or soldiers' tales of the illness caused by vaccines and sera in the Army. They are generally, if correct at all, "the exceptions which prove the rule."

I quite grant that many parents have grounds for grumbling at the mode of procedure and lymph

used, but here again, realising the necessity of the operation, the purest lymph and skilled operators should be provided, it is cheaper than stamping out an outbreak!—Yours, &c.,

J. B. N. PATERSON.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I am afraid if I had been the nurse in attendance on the Hull twins, I should not have attempted a cold bath. After attending to eyes, mouths, etc., with lotion, I should have rubbed the babies all over with olive oil, and dressed them as quickly as possible, putting on woollen garments only, if procurable. Under the circumstances, I should then have put them in their mother's bed, till some other means of heating could be arranged. Apparently, the family was in poor circumstances or the nurse would have sent the father to beg, borrow—or buy—a small spirit lamp and saucepan. So I have ruled out this first idea which came to me. I worked in a midwifery district some years ago, where there was a great deal of distress, but even in the night I rarely was hard up for hot-water, as neighbours only very little better off than the patients would bring in jugs and kettles of boiling water with the excuse that "perhaps the gas-meter at that house might not be in order," and they knew a little more water might be useful.

"SISTER."

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

One of the Early Members.—"With such a splendid Headquarters, the R.B.N.A. has an opportunity of doing a fine work for the profession. Our Club must be the centre of the highest aspirations and of all that makes for the elevation of nursing. Those of us who are out of active work must give time and thought to making it a big success."

Onlooker.—"Why is every body of Nurse^s starting a separate Club? With such a poor profession I doubt if they can all be made to pay. Anyway they need an endowment fund if they are to be run at a price nurses can pay. And do Nurses really like Clubs? I doubt it. Resident Hostels are what they really need—a place to rest in between cases, or to use on a visit from the country."

[We hope Nurses will realise in the future the happiness and use of a Social Centre—organised for their special needs—where something outside the professional routine is possible. Such Clubs should widen their outlook on life. —ED.]

PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTIONS.

May 7th.—How would you care for a patient before, during, and after anaesthesia?

May 14th.—Mention some surgical emergencies and state how you would deal with them.

We regret we are unable to award a prize this week.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)