

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 TRAINING OF LADIES IN ASYLUM WORK.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—The letter you published recently under the above heading was of immense interest, and, like everything from Miss Nightingale's pen, trenchant and fundamental.

I am afraid that even now we are a long way from realising her ideals; but this I am sure of—that although all patients need nurses of a high and refined standard, none need them so much as those in our mental hospitals; firstly, because by reason of their illness they are often trying to deal with; secondly, because the brain is the most delicate and complicated organ of the body; and lastly, because, of necessity, mental patients are peculiarly dependent on the kindness and understanding of those in charge of them.

Yours sincerely,

A RELATIVE.

PRISONERS AND CAPTIVES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—The article on "Hospitals in State Prisons" last week drew attention to several points that need emphasising. I wonder how many people realise "the strain on a man due to his trial," and the need for some consideration of the condition of the man (or woman's) nervous system when first admitted to prison. There is no occasion for softness, nor should our aim be to make a prisoner's life a pleasant one, else his sentence fails in its object which is punitive and deterrent. But while a man in sound health is rightly made to bear the punishment for his crime the aim should always be remedial—to make him a better citizen when once again he is at liberty. And for the man who is not in sound health, or whose mental condition is such that he is, in some degree at least irresponsible, obviously the first essential is that he should be graded accordingly, and to this end should undergo a medical examination on admission with subject classification. No one acquainted with the inside of a prison, or who studies the physiognomy of criminals, can doubt that mental disease or disability plays an important part in their manufacture. When the nation seriously tackles the question of eugenics there is little doubt that there will be a material decrease in our criminal population.

In the meantime, in addition to the medical staff let there be a nursing staff in every prison, for trained nurses can do much for our "prisoners and captives," both for those sufficiently ill to be admitted to the prison infirmary, and also for that considerable number of prisoners in a women's

prison those suffering from venereal diseases. Male nurses might in the same way find their vocation in caring for male prisoners similarly affected. There is also plenty of scope for nurses in looking after the health of the prisoners and in dealing with minor ailments as they arise. Do not let us forget that those living behind closed doors, whether in prisons or asylums, are benefited by public opinion and public interest.

Yours faithfully,

EUGENIST.

THE BEST NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—The sympathetic article in your last week's issue of the B.J.N. on the Hospital of the Ministry of Pensions at Orpington should serve to help re-ignite in nurses the enthusiasm for the broken heroes so noticeable in the War.

The best is not good enough for these men, and the Ministry of Pensions Nursing Service should never fail to attract the very flower of our profession, which will provide, as "M. B." truly says, the greatest vocation which any nurse could desire.

Yours faithfully,

SISTER.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

IN THE CHILL DAWN.

Miss E. E. Please, *Dorking*, writes: "I have been on night duty for two years; it is a war job, and will soon end now. I expect it will be my last, too. I am tired, after 30 years. Still, I have had a good time on the whole, and would be a nurse again, if we could only begin again, and leave out all the mistakes. I have kept two anniversaries of Edith Cavell's death in the chill dawn. Poor woman! What must she have felt like, going out alone to die."

REPLY TO CORRESPONDENT.

Dr. Preston Ball states in relation to anti-gout diet, that white meats are by no means free from purin-forming bodies, but if chicken or rabbit is given it should be boiled, not roasted. The meat from young animals, such as lamb, is to be avoided as young meat gives a very high percentage of purin bodies. Also all internal organs—Liver, Pancreas (or Sweetbread), Kidney, etc., for the same reason.

PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTIONS.

September 10th.—What do you know of summer diarrhoea, its causes, treatment and nursing care?

September 17th.—In what cases may profuse sweating occur as a prominent symptom? What are the causes of this sweating, and what its special nursing?

September 24th.—How would you prevent foot-drop, acute thirst, constipation, and vomiting after an operation?

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