

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 IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING THE PHYSIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN THE TRAINING OF NURSES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Dr. Fairbairn's views as to including a knowledge of the reproductive system in the training of nurses are a cause for thankfulness to all those who have realised the reactionary influence its omission has hitherto exercised in connection with sex-teaching for children.

The complete confidence of women of all classes in the wisdom of the nurse is almost pathetic; too often it has been a case of the blind leading the blind, for many nurses are still hampered and prejudiced by the disastrous impressions on this matter received in their youth, regarding the topic as one to be avoided if possible, thus losing magnificent opportunities, especially among the labouring class, of freeing the subject from prurience and lifting it on to the plane where it rightly belongs, namely, as the most miraculous and beautiful of all the mighty works of God.

Until nurses are so educated I do not see how venereal disease is to be stamped out, or even reduced, for it has its roots in a wholly false regard of the reproductive system.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
MENA M. G. BIELBY.

Cranford, Middlesex.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

THE GREATEST BOON.

Miss Lily S. Huggins, Durban.—"I had a very successful year last year, but this year owing to the numbers of trained nurses who have passed into S. Africa, and the numbers of nursing homes started, the last few years, there is not enough work to go round, and many nurses talk of returning to England where they are better known."

The B.J.N. is the greatest boon out here with its sound principles, and I always find that those who do not appreciate it are those whose sense of justice and right are lacking."

[Trained nurses will do well to get reliable information as to nursing conditions in the Overseas Dominions before leaving home, and it certainly is necessary to have definite work to go to. We appreciate compliment *re* B.J.N.—ED.]

A CLEAR CASE FOR COURAGEOUS ACTION.

Another Glasgow Nurse.—"It would appear that the Scottish Nurses owe thanks to the English Council for making, in the first instance, a stand against the policy of the Scottish Board of Health. Am glad to see Scottish Council is also holding up registration until justice is done. But I have not heard of one public meeting of Matrons and

nurses being summoned to approach the Scottish Board of Health on the matter of placing specialists on the General Register. It is this timidity upon the part of the nurses which makes men in Government Departments think they can do just as they please with us. I am a member of the College and think it should have moved to prevent injustice."

A REAL PENSION FUND REQUIRED.

Member Royal National Pension Fund.—"I quite agree with your remarks in last week's issue. An annuity of £26 is really of very little use in these days. The trouble is nurses hope for 'pastures new'—marriage, emigration, a home somehow—and fail to keep up their policies."

[Sir Thomas Dewey who presided at the recent annual meeting of the Fund, is reported to have said: "Our National Pension Fund was started with the object of assisting the nurse to obtain an assured income for life on reaching a certain age; but I am bound to say that to a certain extent we have failed in our endeavours. Many nurses have joined the Fund—I have just mentioned that we had a large increase last year—but I am sorry that only a small proportion continue to pay the premiums required before the annuity can commence. Unfortunately, the Pension Fund started with the provision that the policy-holder could practically draw out every penny paid in whenever she thought fit to do so. To show you to what extent this is taken advantage of, I may mention, that during the past three years more than 3,000 policies have been surrendered, and the nurses have received in cash over £250,000—that is, a quarter-of-a-million—in respect of these policies during the last three years. At the present time we are only paying annuities to 2,891 nurses; the number should have been at least 10,000. The Council are to blame for allowing the National Pension Fund to remain so long on a Savings Bank basis; we cannot altogether blame the nurses for withdrawing, especially during the last few years. Our premium income is now decreasing instead of increasing as it should do annually, and some alteration must therefore be made in our methods. The ideal system, to my mind, would be for all hospitals to be grouped for the purpose of establishing a comprehensive Pension Fund for Nurses to which hospitals as well as nurses should contribute."

From the inception of this Fund we have criticised it. It is not and never has been a Pension Fund but an Insurance Society, for which the nurses paid the whole cost. We quite agree with Sir Thomas Dewey that a real Pension Fund for Nurses is required; but now that they are compelled by Labour legislation to pay for national and unemployment insurance we doubt if they will pay compulsorily for a Pension unless the three schemes can be organized in one.—ED.]

PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTIONS.

July 23rd.—What are the three principal methods of feeding infants? What are the symptoms of over-feeding, and what are the results?

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)