

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.

PRACTICAL NURSING FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

Via Sala 8, Milan, Italy.

DEAR MADAM,—I wish most emphatically to endorse the remarks you make in your issue of July 9th, on the advisability of including definite teaching in practical nursing in the Public Health Courses for International Nursing Students.

Usually foreign Red Cross societies, while giving their nurses excellent scientific teaching, and a great deal of practice in operation theatre and surgical wards, have so far never given real systematic teaching in the art of practical nursing.

What our excellent Italian Red Cross nurses know on the subject they have found out for themselves or learnt from English books, never having had professional Matrons or Sisters to teach them, and until lately the subject of practical nursing was not included in the Red Cross curriculum. Now, I am happy to say, a new curriculum has been compiled at Red Cross headquarters which gives a prominent place to the teaching of practical nursing. But most foreign nurses (except those trained in English training schools) who have already taken their diploma, know very little on the subject, and when a Public Health Course for Italian Red Cross and other nurses was arranged in Rome by the American Red Cross, at my suggestion a great many lessons on bed-making, washing of patients, and other nursing details were included in the course, with great benefit to the students and ultimately I hope to the patients.

Believe me, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

WINIFRED TERNI DE GREGORY.

President of the Lombard Branch, National Association of Italian Nurses.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I read with very great interest the important paper by Dr. Fairbairn on "Teaching the Physiology of Reproduction in the Training of Nurses," in a recent issue of the JOURNAL. Surely there are few people responsible for the education of nurses who, in these days, hold that this should not be taught, just as much as the physiology of the brain, the respiratory, or any other system.

It cannot logically be claimed that only midwives are concerned with this system. Certainly it often occupies their horizon to the exclusion of the other parts, concerning which they should

have knowledge, for the human body cannot be nursed in sections, but inasmuch as nurses in general practice have to nurse patients suffering from fibroid growths, intimately connected with the uterus, cases of the removal of ovarian cysts, to say nothing of salpingitis, and pyo-salpinx. Caesarian Section comes quite as often into the sphere of the trained nurse as of the midwife, both at the time of operation, and in regard to the after nursing. If a nurse therefore knows nothing of the anatomy and physiology of reproduction, she is handicapped indeed. Such ignorance is unfair both to her patient and herself. It is surely forgotten also by the critics that many maternity nurses are not midwives, *i.e.*, women who are qualified to conduct normal labour without a medical practitioner, nor do they desire to assume this responsibility. Are they therefore to know nothing of the physiology of reproduction? The claim surely is a remnant of that conventualism which prohibits nuns from washing a patient below the second button of the nightshirt or nightdress, and ignores the fact that he has a body, which needs attention below the waist.

I am, Dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

SUPERINTENDENT.

We have to thank Mr. W. Falkingham, Head Male Nurse, for a letter on the question of registration of Male Nurses, for which we hope to find space next week.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

Esther G. Martin.—"Will the General Nursing Council do something to help to preserve Private Nursing as a means by which Registered Nurses can make a living? So many of the hospitals with training schools attached, now use private nursing as a means of profit, that it is narrowing down to nothing for independent workers. It is so unfair. I often wonder how the medical profession would like the system if applied to themselves. Then again in Nursing Homes, which charge high fees as such, V.A.D.'s are now constantly employed. It is not only depriving sick people who pay high fees for skilled nursing, of the skill to which they have a right, but encouraging these semi-trained V.A.D.'s to enter the labour market in competition with trained women.

[We hope the moral effect of State Registration may act in two ways. "Registered Nurses" if united will be able to ask training schools for justice, and if strong enough obtain it. They have the remedy in their own hands so far as V.A.D.'s are concerned. "Registered Nurses" must refuse to "cover" untrained women in private practice, that is to work with them on terms of equality. —ED.]

PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION.

August 6th.—What do you know of cholera, including its causes, symptoms, and nursing care?

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