

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 AGE OF RICKETS IN EUROPE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—The excavations in Luxor make us realise how short a period in the earth's history is 3,000 years, and how little man has changed, physically and mentally, since 1350 B.C.

Is it safe to assume that rickets during the later Bronze Age could not have been due to malnutrition, or a damp, sunless atmosphere?

Given a sunless valley residence, a faulty digestive system, and unhappiness on the part of the child; a mother who, through disease, may have been unable to feed the child adequately, and a disposition on his part to gloom and inaction which the mother may have indulged, all the probable factors in rickets would have been supplied.

In the light of medical astrology I have studied carefully certain cases of rickets of the latter half of the last century in children of the higher class who had good food and more than the average allowance of sunlight and cubic air-space. In each case defective assimilative power, combined with painful emotion—fear, extreme sensitiveness, and constant screaming—appear to have been the root cause.

Nowadays, such cases could hardly exist amongst the well-to-do because the influence of happiness in nutrition is recognised by many, and the idiosyncrasy of the child is considered until a diet is found that he can assimilate; a weighing-machine and scientific observation of the excreta forming an infallible test of the value of different food stuffs to the individual, whether child or adult.

Until Nature's laws of reproduction are understood and kept we shall always have unhappy and badly-nourished children with us.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

Cranford,
Middlesex.

M. M. G. BIELBY.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

TREATMENT BY STEAM KETTLE.

Registered Sick Children's Nurse.—"May I add to your good advice *re* treatment by steam kettle, that the kettle spout should never be placed under the tent until the water is boiling and the steam getting off freely. There is then no chance of spurting water. The kettle should not be filled too full of water."

SIR WILMOT HERRINGHAM'S COUNCIL.

Registered Poor Law Sister.—"In an editorial in the *Poor Law Officers' Journal*, dated January

26th, on 'Snobbishness at Bath,' the writer alluded to the General Nursing Council as 'Sir Wilmot Herringham's Council.' Why? Our Council no more belongs to its Chairman (although he acts as if it did) than the General Medical Council 'belongs' to Sir Donald MacAlister, or the Central Midwives' Board to Sir Francis Champneys. We nurses are a poor down-trodden lot, but I strongly object to our Statutory Nursing Council being allocated as the private property of one medical man. It only shows how true it is that a medical oligarchy has been established, thanks to the servility of the College matrons and their satellites."

THE DEATH PENALTY.

Celtic writes: "Your article 'A Memorable Sunday Afternoon,' in the issue of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING of the 20th ult. interested me very deeply, but the thing that lies even nearer to my heart is the continuance of the infliction of the death penalty. Is it not time that the abolition of the death penalty should be sought for and obtained? Is it right to suppose that a murderer has sinned past all redemption, that he must be hanged and robbed of any chance whatever of making good in this world? Is not the termination of life the prerogative of the Almighty? Would not a higher value be set on life if even the Law refused to take it?"

[The Divine pronouncement, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," is the authority for retaining the extreme penalty as the punishment for murder when extenuating circumstances cannot justifiably be pleaded.—Ed.]

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received a ten-inch letter from the Matron of the Royal United Hospital, Bath, for which we regret we have not space this week, objecting to a paragraph which appeared in the Echoes in our last issue *re* the withdrawal of probationers for training from the R.U.H. by the Bath Board of Guardians. We shall deal at length with the question in our next issue.—Ed.

WHERE TO REGISTER.

Apply for Application Form to the Registrar:—

ENGLAND AND WALES—12, York Gate, Regent's Park, London, N.W.

SCOTLAND—13, Melville Street, Edinburgh.

IRELAND—33, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

Forms should be carefully filled in and the names given for references from persons who have agreed to supply them.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTIONS.

February 17th.—What is the importance of diet in a case of (1) diabetes; (2) valvular disease of the heart? Give a suggested menu for one day in each case.

February 24th.—Describe the duties of a Sister-Tutor, and what she should teach.

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