

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 SAD AFTER-EFFECTS OF ENCEPHALITIS LETHARGICA.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I was struck by the mention of the sad after-effects of sleepy sickness, or Encephalitis Lethargica, in the two latest issues of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, and would like, if I may, to give an experience of a sleepy sickness case which fell to my lot to nurse while on my holidays some years ago, away in the country. My friends were asked if I would see a girl who was very ill. The doctor pronounced the case to be sleepy sickness, and gave no hope of recovery.

I saw she was too ill to be left (and had a very competent sister of hers to look after her at night), and after my going on with the remedies of warmth to the extremities, cold applications to head, with as much fresh air as possible, a darkened room, and the bowels, which were quite impassive, being attended to, she became almost moribund on the 9th day, when mustard was applied over heart and mustard plasters, 12 ins. by 6 ins., to calves of legs for one hour, but with very little reaction. The spine, chest and abdomen were also rubbed with spirit. Towards evening a slight change for the better came, which continued by slow degrees until convalescence was reached. What I would like to emphasise is that, to our great anxiety, when she regained consciousness, the patient seemed to be quite light-headed, and this condition persisted as she slowly gained bodily strength. She was having very little natural sleep, so when I arrived in the early mornings, and after the usual preliminaries of sponging, food and attention to the bowels, I begged that there might not be a sound in the house, inside or outside (it being a farm). This was most faithfully carried out, and the patient slept hour after hour, and each day she became calmer and more like herself. After some time of this natural sleep, without any drugs, I often found that rhythm—*i.e.*, sponging of face and hands in tepid or cold water for about 10 minutes, procured sleep, as one finds it so often does in nerve cases. She was naturally fond of pretty colours, etc., so in the early stages of convalescence I used to wear an attractively coloured tie, or belt, or blouse, so as to attract her attention, without the necessity of her speaking. One day I noticed that she tried to rouse herself and point to my belt, which was a little crooked, and which she endeavoured with great satisfaction to put straight for me.

It seemed to me that an abundance of *real* sleep, with absolute quiet, and happy surroundings (or "good mothering" which is so aptly put in the article referred to) was what saved the nervous system of this girl. When well enough she sat out of doors most of the day with a shady hat on, or shade over her eyes, and eventually she went to the seaside for some weeks, and was well and strong, though thin, before the year was out.

I should add that the doctor in charge of the case was ill, and, unfortunately, I did not see him often, so a great deal had to be done by "the light of nature."

The helplessness of those suffering from the after-effects of Encephalitis Lethargica is very awful. It is, indeed, merciful to come to their rescue.

Yours faithfully,

'S. R. N.,' F.B.C.N.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S MATERNITY HOSPITAL

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I see in the Supplement of the current issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING it is stated in connection with the rebuilding of the above Hospital on a more suitable site that the plans provide for the *first Isolation Block* in a voluntary hospital in this country for cases of puerperal fever. I am not sure whether "*this country*" means Great Britain or England. In any case, I would point out that the present Glasgow Royal Maternity and Women's Hospital was rebuilt in 1908 under the direction of Colonel Mackintosh, the well-known authority on Hospital construction, and at that time the Directors of the Hospital recognised the necessity of providing a special department for puerperal fever cases, and an Isolation Block was included in the new building. This department, complete with operating theatre, is cut off from the Hospital proper by a ventilating corridor.

For your information I enclose copy of a reprint from the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the British Empire, June, 1908, giving a detailed description of the Hospital buildings.

May I also point out that a temporary Laboratory for Research purposes was opened in 1919, and the new Laboratory, the gift of the late Mr. William Robertson, Glasgow, was opened in 1925.

This building was also designed and arranged by Colonel Mackintosh.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM HILL,

House Superintendent.

The Glasgow Royal Maternity
and Women's Hospital,
Rotten Row,
Glasgow.

["This Country" referred to England, and our exact words were: "It is believed that the plans provide for the first isolation block in a voluntary hospital in this country for cases of puerperal fever." Many years ago we saw at the Hospital for Women, Sparkhill, Birmingham, a very well arranged open-air ward for puerperal fever cases, and were informed that the results obtained were excellent.—ED.]

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES
AT MONTREAL.

The National Council of Nurses of Great Britain has decided to advise those of its members who propose to attend the International Congress of Nurses at Montreal, in July, 1929, to travel by the s.s. *Alaunia* (Cunard Line), which, by special arrangement, will leave Southampton and Cherbourg on June 28th, and is due to arrive at Montreal at 2 a.m. on Sunday, July 7th.

The arrangements for the voyage are in the hands of Mr. Harper, Ocean Travel Department, Thomas Cook & Son, Berkeley Street, Piccadilly, London, W., and it is desirable to get into touch with him as soon as possible, so as to have the best choice of berths. Already over a hundred nurses in this country have definitely booked passages on the *Alaunia* and still applications are coming in.

The International Officers and the four official Delegates of the National Council of Nurses will have to leave England a week earlier to be in time to attend the Business Meetings. The *Ascania*, which leaves Southampton on June 21st, is a convenient boat.

PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR APRIL.

Mention the diseases in which vomiting occurs, and describe anything in the act of vomiting, or in the vomit itself, which may be useful in diagnosis.

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