

## 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 TRAINED NURSE MIDWIFE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—

I am in entire agreement with your correspondent who considers that, if the Midwifery Service in this country is to be improved, organisation among the midwives themselves is the first essential, but there are other factors which might also tend to raise the practice of midwifery very considerably.

May I mention one. The Ministry of Health makes grants to Maternity Hospitals towards the training of women who undertake to practise midwifery after gaining the certificate of the Central Midwives Board, and these hospitals are thus able to take pupils at a greatly reduced fee, or even to offer them free scholarships. It is manifest that it is the duty of all concerned to see that the best type of candidate is chosen to benefit by these grants.

I think it must be conceded that the most desirable candidates are women with experience in nursing, who hold the certificate of one of the General Nursing Councils, and who have a background of knowledge which untrained women—who barely know the right from the wrong end of a thermometer—have still to acquire. They have also, let us hope, the surgical sense and conscience, and this again makes them far safer in maternity cases than those whose surgical conscience has to be developed during their training.

The Departmental Committee on the Training and Employment of Midwives state in their Report that "it has been urged by many witnesses that as an ideal to be aimed at, in the future, all midwives should be required to possess the general nursing qualification. They argue that a good deal of a midwife's work is nursing of a special order, and that a knowledge of the principles and practice of sick nursing would be of the greatest advantage in giving her a full appreciation of the value of surgical cleanliness and care, and in teaching her to recognise symptoms of general illness. There can be no question," say the Committee, "but that if such an end could be brought about it would be good for the profession as a whole, and for the community at large. But" (there is always a but when reforms are imperative) "we have grave doubts as to its practicability."

So be it for the moment, though I profoundly disagree. But, since the Departmental Committee, the Central Midwives' Board, and the Midwives' Institute, all apparently consider that Midwives should hold the dual qualification of Registered Nurse and Certified Midwife, may I suggest one very practical means of attracting Registered Nurses to practise as Midwives.

Why should a beginning not be made by restricting the grants made by the Ministry of Health to Registered Nurses who undertake to practise as midwives at the conclusion of their training? The hospitals would get the best material, and the scholarship, or bursary, or whatever it may be called, would be an attraction to Registered Nurses to add that of Certified Midwife to their qualifications.

It seems to me a very simple and practical suggestion, and worth thinking about, and one to which the attention of the Minister of Health might reasonably be directed. Perhaps, dear Madam, you would advise, and assist, if you think well.

I am, Yours faithfully,  
SUPERINTENDENT.

## REGISTRATION AND INSPECTION OF NURSING HOMES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—

I notice that the London County Council have authorised a medical man to enter and inspect Nursing Homes under their authority. That of course is quite right. But when are we going to hear of a Registered Nurse, experienced in the management of Nursing Homes being similarly authorised? It is just as important that the Nursing in these Homes should be inspected by an expert as that the medical side of the work should be.

Yours faithfully,

AN ANXIOUS LOOKER ON.

## KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

## Human Nature Commands Respect.

*An old Territorial Sister* writes: "I have read steadily through all the Great War books which have come as a shock to so many women who never went to the front, and which describe conditions with which women, even nurses, were not familiar.

"In spite of everything, human nature as a whole, tried beyond endurance, commands respect.

"Much of the heroism stamped in the mud received no recognition, but those of us who tended the sick still marvel at the endurance, courtesy and gratitude of the suffering multitude of all classes of men under our care.

"It is well the horrors and gross animal conditions of war should have been made public, written in the vernacular by men, but when is a woman coming forward to write a Nurse's History of the Great War? Would I had the capacity and pen to present the truth in all its grandeur. An epic indeed!"

## The Value of a Professional Organ.

*An F.B.C.N.* writes: "I could not have believed that reading carefully the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING monthly could have had such an enlightening effect on my mind as it has done. Where I trained the BRITISH JOURNAL was not placed in our sitting-room along with others on which we were professionally fed, or, rather, starved.

"Until I began as a Fellow of the B.C.N. to read the BRITISH JOURNAL, I knew nothing of national and international nursing, and did not realise myself as part of a great sisterhood of healing, deeply in sympathy with one another all over the world. I feel sure the tone of many of our nursing schools would be improved by the study of our JOURNAL."

## THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING AND THE "MIDWIFE" SUPPLEMENT

Is the Official Organ of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain; The British College of Nurses; The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland; The Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council, and the Registered Nurses' Association. The Official Supplement of the Royal British Nurses' Association is incorporated in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING. Apply, Manager, 39, Portland Place, London, W.1.

## NOTICE.

We regret we are unable to award a prize this month no paper of sufficient merit in our Competition having been received.

## PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR MARCH.

Describe some common diseases of the skin, their characteristic appearance, and their nursing care.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)