

## 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.*

## VITAMINS SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED SCIENTIFICALLY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Sir George Newman is to be congratulated for his public warning against the promiscuous and indiscriminate "fortifying" of foods with vitamins, which you quoted in your November issue. This practice, particularly applied to bread and other foods, is likely to be a menace to health.

Vitamins should be administered scientifically as a medicine and not given indiscriminately through the medium of ordinary articles of diet.

Unquestionably there is serious need for the provision of medicinal preparations which, following the research of the scientists, can be relied upon to contain pure vitamins in properly balanced proportions and which are now available in radiostoleum (Vitamins A and D) and in radiomalt (Vitamin B).

By his warning Sir George Newman has rendered an even greater service than when previously he called public attention to the fact that after the examination of 1,635 unselected five-year-old children at elementary schools it was found that 87 per cent. were suffering from rickets due to lack of Vitamin D in their diet.

That disclosure is the more deplorable in the light of the further revelation in Sir George's report of a reduction of 40,000 a year in infantile mortality. This is due in large measure to the medical practice of now prescribing, as a matter of routine, standardised Vitamin A and D to expectant and nursing mothers.

Yours faithfully,

ARBUTHNOT LANE.

(Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane, M.S.)

29, Portland Place, W.1.

## A SONNET.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—May I respectfully draw your attention to a literary error in the October issue of the JOURNAL.

The poem by the late Sir Ronald Ross is there described as a Sonnet. The Sonnet is a definite verse form and must be composed of fourteen pentameter lines; whereas the verse so described is of sixteen lines, each line containing only six syllables.

Yours faithfully,

HILARY H. RIGGALL.

[It is true a Sonnet should be of 14 lines, and probably lines 7 and 8 and 15 and 16 would be better printed in one line in each case, when it would conform to this requirement. For the rest, "literary" authorities evidently differ. The *National Encyclopædia* says: "Sonnet (Italian, Sonata, Sonetto), a form of poetry much used by the Italian and Spanish poets, but more sparingly practised in English. The Sonnet properly consists of two quatrains and two tercets, or fourteen lines. The facility of rhyming in the Italian and Spanish languages enables their poets to express every feeling or fancy in the Sonnet; but in English it is more difficult, and the Italian model is seldom strictly adhered to. The general characteristics of this lyrical piece will be best understood from Wordsworth's celebrated 'Sonnet on the Sonnet'" (which is printed). "Other authors, however, have constructed the Sonnet on different systems. By many it is made to consist of twelve alternate rhymes, and the two last rhyming together. There appears

to be no prosodical law regulating its construction, except that it must never exceed nor be less than fourteen lines."—Ed.]

## KERNLES FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

## The Representation of Mental Nurses on the National Council Directorate.

A *Mental Nurse* writes: "Can nothing be done to prevent affiliated organisations to the National Council of Nurses nominating persons as Directors who have no experience whatever in the conduct of the business or affairs of the National Council, and whose names are not even known to half a dozen delegates. Every year this seems to happen, and unfortunately this year the mental nurses have presumably lost representation by an Hon. Officer on the Directorate. All the other special branches of nursing are represented: Fever, Children, etc., but no expert Mental Nurse. From the reports of the I.C.N. Congress mental nursing is evidently recognised as of the utmost importance and I read with the greatest interest the 'Report on Mental Nursing and Hygiene' presented by Fru Karin Neuman-Rahn, and am looking forward to the Paper on the 'Mental Hygiene Movement,' by Miss Effie J. Taylor which you have promised to print. I think our National Council ought to secure the election of a representative of Mental Nursing in the future—the General Hospitals have already ample representation."

## Nursing Not a Job.

"One Who Honours Her Cloth" writes: "Who first degraded nursing by calling it 'a job'? Perhaps she may be mercifully ignored. But it does so jar on my tympanum, and I would plead with my colleagues to remember how deeply Florence Nightingale honoured her cloth—no words were too elevating in her allusions to Nursing. In her estimation it was not only practical but holy work. Please, PLEASE, let us render honour where honour is due. Nursing is not 'a job,' it is a sacred vocation, let us keep it so."

## The Split Preliminary Exam.

"One Portal" writes: "May I suggest that those Matrons who believe in the split Preliminary Exam. should discontinue the Preliminary Training Schools attached to their hospitals, and admit girls direct from the Secondary Schools. It would be interesting to note how these girls survived the Final Exam. What are needed, however, are more well-organised Preliminary Schools of Nursing, complete with teaching appliances—and highly qualified Registered Sister Tutors, where pupils selected by experienced Matrons might 'put in time' before admission to the wards."

## NOTICE.

## "THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING."

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING is published monthly, price 7d., and can be obtained from the Manager, B.J.N. 39, Portland Place, London, W.1.

## PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR JANUARY, 1934.

What is the incubation period, and what are the chief symptoms and treatment of diphtheria? What sites in the body are affected by this disease? What are the complications, and how would you deal with them?

## THE LAST WORD FOR 1933.

The Shepherds sing; and shall we silent be?  
My God, no Hymne for Thee?  
My soul's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds  
Of thoughts and words and deeds.

—George Herbert.