

## COMING EVENTS.

May 9th.—Cancer Hospital (Free), Fulham Road, London, S.W.3. Opening of the New Buildings by Her Majesty The Queen. 3.30 p.m.

May 13th.—The Nightingale Fellowship. The Commemoration Service, Hospital Chapel, St. Thomas's Hospital, 10.45 a.m. The sermon will be preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

May 17th.—East End Maternity Hospital, 384-398, Commercial Road, London, E.1. Annual General Meeting. The Acting Chairman, Lady Jekyll, D.B.E., will preside. 4 p.m.

May 25th.—General Nursing Council for England and Wales. Monthly Meeting, 20, Portland Place, London, W.1. 2.30 p.m.

May 26th.—The British College of Nurses. Meeting of Council, 39, Portland Place, London, W.1, 2.15 p.m.

May 31st.—Opening of the new Mental Hospital, Shenley, Middlesex, by His Majesty The King accompanied by Her Majesty The Queen.

## JUNE.

June 1st.—Princess Elizabeth of York Hospital for Children, Shadwell, E.1. Lantern Lecture on "Billingsgate," by Rev. Arthur G. B. West, M.A., Master Parson and Custodian of Archives, St. Dunstan-in-the East. Chairman: Warren R. Dawson, Esq., F.R.S.E., F.R.S.L. Visitors cordially welcomed. 8.45 p.m.

June 13th.—Alexandra Day will be celebrated.

June 14th.—Meeting. National Florence Nightingale Memorial Committee of Great Britain. The Nightingale Home, St. Thomas's Hospital, 3 p.m.

## 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 Editor, THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.  
For Publication.

## LORD DAWSON'S BILL ON CONTRACEPTIVES.

MADAM,—I read with amazement the letter signed by Isabel Macdonald, the Secretary of the Royal British Nurses' Association, in which the nurses modestly say members of the medical profession alone "are possessed of a knowledge to justify authority for sanctioning the use of contraceptives." Have they forgotten that over half (50 per cent.) of the women of this country do not even see a doctor for childbirth, which is a thousand times more difficult and dangerous than the advising or placing of a contraceptive? Why should the Nurses try to interfere with help so urgently needed which is being given by their sister Midwife-nurses?

Yours faithfully,

MARIE C. STOPES.

President,

Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress,  
108, Whitfield Street, London, W.1.

[We regret that Dr. Marie Stopes should advocate contraceptive treatment of patients by midwives. In our opinion, their special purpose in the body politic is (1) to effect normal deliveries and (2) to keep in touch with women who desire their services in childbirth during the period of pregnancy, in order that its progress may be observed and any abnormal conditions be referred for medical advice. The services of midwives are not sought, as a rule, until pregnancy is established, and often not until the coming child is viable.

What is a contraceptive? As defined in Lord Dawson's Bill, "Contraceptive" means any appliance, instrument,

drug, preparation or thing, designed, prepared, or intended to prevent pregnancy resulting from sexual intercourse between human beings."

How are contraceptives concerned with the practice of legitimate midwifery?—ED.]

## PURVEYORS OF CONTRACEPTIVES.

DEAR MADAM,—I was very glad to read in the April issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING your note on the Contraceptives Bill. I have been carefully watching its progress through the House of Lords, and it would have had my whole-hearted support but for the amazing addition moved by Lord Dawson on February 27th, and carried, by which registered nurses and certified midwives are permitted to sell or offer for sale any contraceptive to persons whom they are attending professionally. It would be to me inconceivable that Lord Dawson should have sponsored such a clause had I not seen it in print in the Bill as amended on Report. Surely Lord Dawson cannot have consulted any Associations of Nurses or Midwives on the desirability, or propriety, of this clause.

In regard to registered nurses they would place themselves in an entirely false position if they sold, or offered for sale, contraceptives to patients they were attending professionally. They would be interfering with the treatment of the doctor under whom they were nursing, and they have no authority, and, I believe, no desire, to practise medicine.

The case of midwives would be even more difficult, and they might easily become involved, perhaps innocently, in procuring criminal abortion. While all contraceptives may not be abortifacients, the dividing line is very thin, and in some instances temptation would certainly arise to cover illegal practices, a very lucrative business, while the income earned by a midwife in ordinary practice is a very modest one.

I sincerely hope that better counsels will prevail and this objectionable clause be deleted in the House of Commons.

Yours faithfully,

CERTIFIED MIDWIFE.

## KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

An outraged Nurse writes:—"Is it possible that anyone can think that nurses and midwives wish to have the power to procure and sell contraceptives, without a doctor's prescription. I should have thought it incredible, but that I see that Lord Dawson proposes to provide for this in his Contraceptives Bill, and the House of Lords agreed to the proposal. I do hope that every registered nurse and certified midwife will write to her Member of Parliament when the question comes before the House of Commons and protest, and ask him (or her) to do so in the strongest possible terms."

A Member of the B.C.N. writes:—"I read with the keenest interest the account of the special meeting to present reasons for opposition to division of preliminary examination for nurses held at our College, and did wish that I were a London member, so that I could have been present at the meeting where everything was explained so clearly. I am sure the meeting must have been most inspiring and that everyone left it determined to do her part to prevent such a great wrong being inflicted on the rising generation of nurses, and the work for the profession of yourself, dear Editor, and others of our pioneers being so injured."

## PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR JUNE.

What is a counter-irritant?

Name three and the method of applying them.

No Prize was awarded for the May Competition.

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