

## 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 thanks correspondents for letters naturally written in the heat of the moment, criticising the suggestion of the Select Committee on Nursing Services, on its proposal to degrade the minimum standard of nursing education, and protecting semi-trained nurses by Act of Parliament. The Editor hopes, after serious consideration, to advise her colleagues on the State Register of a course of action by which they may try to prevent this grave attempt to depreciate the safe standards of nursing efficiency.

## NATIONAL OR NAZI ?

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Your advice to the Minister of Health under the above heading, calling his attention to the growing indignation of the *free* Nurses' Organisations at the attempt now in force for the past two years of flatly refusing to recognise the right of the Registered Nurses' organisations to representation on committees set up by the Government to consider their professional affairs, and control their educational and economic status in the community, will be eagerly supported by those nurses who are determined not to be controlled by an organisation, which is in no sense a self-governing Nurses' organisation—such an attempt at coercion has in the past, and will in the future, be determinedly resisted, and it is good news that the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council is contemplating active propaganda in the Lobby, which it exercised so effectively in the past. It should have many recruits.

What this Government requires is an intensive course of John Stuart Mill's works on logic and political economy; especially should they study his Essay on Liberty. Liberty as he conceived it, we are told, was something greater than any system of government, as it involved the spiritual integrity of the individual soul.

It is this ruthless denial by the Ministry of Health of spiritual integrity to members of the Nurses' Organisations which has aroused such a keen sense of injury in their ranks. That two committees have been set up by the Ministry of Health—the Select Committee on the Nursing Services, which has just issued an interim report, and the Central Emergency Committee "To compile and maintain a Register of Nurses and Nursing auxiliaries," and that the Minister has not only excluded independent nurse representatives, but flooded the committees with their employers, lay and medical, is the very antithesis of National Government and Democracy, which its Ministers so loudly claim as their policy. Personally, I can see no difference between the policy of the Dictatorships and that of our spurious Democrats. Be assured of my active help in the Lobby—and in my constituency.

A LIFE MEMBER OF THE

REGISTERED NURSES' PARLIAMENTARY COUNCIL.

P.S.—I note our colleagues in India have suffered from Dictatorship in Madras.

## KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

## THE NURSING STANDARDS DEFENCE FUND.

Miss M. Breay, S.R.N., writing in support of the "Nursing Standards Defence Fund" states: "What seems to me most important is that 'Invalid Attendants' should have nothing to do with the State Register of Nurses. The General Nursing Council has its definite work, given it by Parliament, to define and uphold the minimum training necessary for a trained nurse for the

*safety of the public.* What respect can it expect from State Registered Nurses if it attempts to organise women trained in nursing who do not attain that standard, whatever name they may give them? And as apparently the second grade nurses are only to be called upon for 'a small fee' who is going to pay for the numerous officials, clerical labour, office room, and publication of the Roll required for their organisation and control? The expenditure of the General Nursing Council last year amounted to over £50,000! Every pound of which was subscribed by the Registered Nurses. Is it proposed that our Headquarters, and professional and clerical staff shall be used to promote the 'second grade' worker whose ignorance and ethical standards are not only a danger to the public but an insult to the intelligence of a skilled profession? Surely this would be adding insult to injury so far as we Registered Nurses are concerned.

"Our great safeguard the one portal is down—yet Parliament must consider any amendment to the Nurses Registration Act; and the first thing M.P.s will be up against is the decision of the Scottish Inter-Departmental Committee *against* the recognition of the 'Assistant Nurse' for good and sufficient reasons. It is nonsense to argue, as the English Select Committee has done, that 'conditions are different in Scotland.' The only difference is that the Scottish Committee has apparently more vision and sense.

## Depreciation of Status of Matron.

"The depreciation of the status of the Matron is apparent throughout 'suggested reforms'.

"The first lamb to be led to the slaughter is without doubt the Sister Tutor. It would appear lay tutors will be preferred.

"Private Nurses are to be licensed and inspected by Public Authorities, thus establishing lay control over Registered Nurses in association with the Assistant Nurses.

"Anyway may I subscribe £5 to the 'Nursing Standards Defence Fund,' we cannot get far without money?"

## A Pearl of the Finest Orient.

*An American Nurse in London* writes: "I just loved your little vignette of the late Mrs. Potter Palmer, of Chicago, who spent much time in London when a widow residing at Hampden House, Green Street, then the town house of the late Duke and Duchess of Abercorn. We Americans were proud of her beauty and fine business capacity, and always thankful she did not marry a Duke. Let us hope you intend to write your Memoirs in the same graphic vein."

## "Sublime Sylvan Solitude."

*Fellow B.C.N.* writes: "One good result of the move of the B.C.N. from noisy Marylebone to the Royal Borough of Kensington will be access to what has been called 'the most romantic tea-garden in Europe,' hidden away in a leafy bower in the stately Gardens of a Royal Palace. Nothing can be more desirable than lovely Kensington Gardens, not five minutes' walk from our new front door."

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## PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR MARCH.

Define the Place and Duties of the Nurse in our Health Services.

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