

cleanliness required in labour wards, nurseries, and lying-in wards cannot—with safety to the mothers be relegated to the domestic staff. The potential risk of infection in Maternity Hospitals is great. Cleanliness is the basis of asepsis and asepsis is the most important factor in midwifery.

"Our duties in Part II are naturally the same as in Part I but we bring to our work a greater degree of knowledge, and can see the result of the application of principles we have been taught. Our practical experience is widened; our outlook broadened, giving us a solid foundation for the confidence we need. We certainly feel more competent to advise and supervise the expectant mother, and to deal with the grave emergencies which we may meet.

"We would advise your correspondent to keep in mind the fact that the midwives' training is arranged primarily in the interests of the Mothers of the Nation.—Yours sincerely,

"JEAN P. FERLIE,

"M.B.E., R.G.N., S.C.M., Matron-in-Charge."

#### ANIMOSITY, IDLE GOSSIP, SCANDAL AND SLANDER.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I should be glad if you could spare me a small space in your journal for the following enclosure which might be helpful.

I was very much impressed by the following remarks which I heard at a Service recently, and venture to pass them on—subject being "Constantly to speak the truth, boldly to rebuke vice." When one reads everywhere posters warning us against giving away secrets which are vital to the enemy, one has to remember the most dangerous weapon we each one of us possess and one which can do the most moral harm if we allow it, is *the tongue*. Dangers which may arise from misuse of the tongue may be classed under four heads in accordance with the extent of their moral harm. They are animosity, idle gossip, scandal and slander.

Curiosity (of the wrong kind) is one which seeks to find out other people's business when it does not concern us. The animosity on the other hand which it is right to possess is one which seeks to find out the truths about God and man. Idle gossip is either empty, malicious talk or chatter which may seem innocent enough on the face of things, but which may lead to serious and unforeseen consequences. It so often leads to underestimating other people's motives and to magnify their faults. Scandal is the spreading of true or ill-founded stories which increase in fabulousness as they are passed from mouth to mouth. Scandal is the spreading of stories which are often not based upon fact and are calculated to do harm to the person or persons concerned. Last of all there is slander. This is perhaps the most dangerous weapon of the tongue. A slanderer is one who accuses a person or persons of making certain statements or of doing certain actions which are wholly untrue, thus endeavouring to rob those concerned of their character and good name. Slander is the worst form of evil-speaking, as it does far more harm than distinctive criticism. Criticism of course should be calculated to be of the helpful, constructive type rather than the negative distinctive kind. Slander is an infringement of our Christian duty towards our neighbour, because we are told in the Catechism that we are to keep our tongues from evil speaking, lying and slandering; the opposite of truth is a lie. The devil is the father of lies. Indeed it is extremely doubtful whether a lie can ever be justified from the moral standpoint. We should guard against asking our hearers any question which we know may cause them to tell us a lie. If we do this there will be

no time for the devil to use our tongues to bad purpose and shall be able to constantly speak the truth to rebuke vice.

B. L. T.

#### KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

##### Severe Criticism.

*An experienced Registered Nurse* writes:—At the present time the Nursing Profession is up against severe criticism owing to the large numbers of Assistant Nurses and Nursing Auxiliaries who have been allowed to work in the many hospitals as nurses, and I am pleased to see in the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING that Miss Cochrane has been appointed to help in the administration of these units.

As orderlies the Nursing Auxiliaries would have been useful, as Nurses of little or no experience they may prove very dangerous to our profession later on, and the Assistant Nurse will from now become an ever increasing menace. One is amazed at the number and type of many of these women. Some, I am sorry to say, have been unfit to nurse from age, conduct, and even the influence of alcohol.

A large number admit not having had an interview with any official before being sent to the hospitals, and certainly the cost of many are a grave waste of the Government money.

"Conscript nurses" are absolutely unnecessary; we have dozens more nurses than are needed, but quality and adequate pay are essential.

An important point seems to me, that in taking over of these large Mental Hospitals matrons should have been appointed who are used to organising large General Hospitals instead of the Matron of the Mental Hospital taking over the annexes for sick and wounded and general cases, which is not their branch of nursing; nor is the routine analogous. Their administration of the nursing of mental patients is not comparable to the type of nursing needed for the sick and wounded in this war, and the training of probationers likewise is suffering badly in many ways.

Much more could be said. Perhaps others will say it."

[We fear until the Nursing Profession is inspired with a sense of professional duty and responsibility, little improvement will be effected for the benefit of the sick. Never has its futility been made more apparent than in the present crisis. We shall probably receive quite a number of indignant letters for daring to express this opinion, *but it is the truth*, and there is but one remedy. Down self and call on Courage to inspire a sense of Public Duty.—Ed.]

#### THE "BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING" AND THE "MIDWIFE" SUPPLEMENT, FOUNDED 1888,

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#### PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR OCTOBER.

Describe Yellow Fever, and how it is propagated and prevented.

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