

## 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.*

## MENTAL NURSING EFFICIENCY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,

I read with relief the report which appeared in July B.J.N., that the Mental Hospital Matrons' Association had, at its Annual General Meeting, passed a strong Resolution in opposition to the policy of the Royal College of Nursing to establish a Roll of partially qualified women under the Nurses' Registration Act. We Mental Nurses have plenty of difficulties to maintain standards already, as so many Medical Superintendents do not insist upon Mental Nurses passing the examination of the G.N.C., and are quite content with their own examination, and if it was not for the encouragement of a majority of the Matrons of Mental Hospitals we should be nowhere. I pray they keep up their demand for efficiency—in no branch of Nursing is the need greater.

## A MENTAL NURSE IN YORKSHIRE.

## KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

## Professional Loyalty.

An L.C.C. Sister writes: "Surely the treatment of Miss A. M. Brownlow, Matron, County Hospital, Farnborough, should be a lesson to all County Council Nurses. Persecution I call it. And may I ask what constitutes nursing ethics upon the part of Registered Nurses if they are at liberty to supersede a colleague who has been exonerated from false accusations and deprive her of her office and professional reputation?"

[If the nursing profession permits the treatment of Miss Brownlow to pass without protest its ethical standards are nil.—Ed.]

## Freedom and Justice.

An old friend of Miss Brownlow writes: "I note in the Press that the present Minister of Health is a religious man who constantly preaches in chapels. How does he reconcile with his conscience his treatment of Miss A. M. Brownlow, who has been deprived of her office and professional character without an investigation? There is something very disturbing in this case. Are we or are we not fighting to the death for freedom and justice, and if so, do freedom and justice begin at home or not?"

[Apparently not.—Ed.]

## "Wishing the B.J.N. Long Life."

The Editor is cheered and grateful for the kind letters received from subscribers.

Miss Florence E. Batt writes: "I marvel at the excellence of the paper in these days, the contents are always so interesting. Wishing the B.J.N. long life."

## WORD FOR THE MONTH.

Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery! Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!—PATRICK HENRY (1775).

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## PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR SEPTEMBER.

Describe Prevention and Cure of Nephritis.

## THE MIDWIFE.

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

## 1940 Record Marriage Year. Slight Fall in Birthrate. Fewer Babies Die.

Marriages in England and Wales last year created a new high record.

A total of 468,267 exceeded 1939's record figure by 28,573.

The figures for 1940 are now completed by the Registrar-General's return for the quarter ended December 31st last, which is now issued. (H.M. Stationery Office, Kingsway, W.C., price 6d., by post 7d.)

During the last 13 weeks of 1940, 224,174 persons were married. Although this figure was 49,480 fewer than in the fourth quarter of 1939, it was 27,281 higher than the average for the five preceding fourth quarters.

The marriage rate per 1,000 for 1940 was 22.6. This is the highest on record, and compares with 21.2 in 1939, and an average of 17.4 during the four preceding years.

The previous highest rate except for 1939 was 20.2 in the year 1920.

During the last war, 1915 established a record for marriages with a total of 360,885 (a rate of 19.4 per 1,000). This figure was not exceeded until 1919, when, in the first year of peace, there were 369,411 weddings (rate 19.8). The record number of marriages for any one quarter was in September, 1939, when in the last two months of peace and the first month of war 152,930 couples were married.

Live births during 1940 numbered 607,131, or 12,221 fewer than during 1939, giving a birthrate of 14.6, against 14.9. A total of 22,648 still births was the lowest on record.

During the December quarter 137,009 live births were registered, which showed a proportion of 1,057 boys to 1,000 girls. The proportion for the 10 preceding fourth quarters was 1,052. There were 5,197 illegitimate births, 218 fewer than in the corresponding quarter of 1939. Fewer babies died during the quarter. The mortality rate under one year of age was 57 per 1,000 live births, which was three below the average of the 10 preceding fourth quarters.

Deaths during 1940 totalled 572,882, or 73,914 more than in 1939. Two-thirds of the increase occurred in the first quarter of last year, when weather conditions were severe and there was a considerable amount of influenza.

## THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

## Report on the Work of the Board for the Year ended March 31st, 1941.

As we go to press we have received a copy of the Report of the work of the Midwives Board to March, 1941. As it is of great interest we hope to refer to it in our next issue. On March 31st, 1941, the Roll of Midwives contained the names of 64,440 women, a net increase of 854 on the number at the end of March, 1940.

According to returns the number of Midwives who notified their intention to practise during the calendar year 1940, was 15,874, which was 1,347 less than in 1939, and 1,620 less than in 1937, which in this respect was the peak year of the last decade. It is to be regretted that this decrease has come at a time when the calls on the midwifery service are increasing.

## THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD FOR SCOTLAND.

Examinations will be held simultaneously in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen (subject to the number of Candidates entered at each centre):—New Rules, First Examination, Tuesday, December 20th, 1941; Second Examination, Tuesday, November 4th, 1941.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)