

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.

We have to thank several correspondents for letters in support of Miss Lavinia Dock's courageous policy on the unjustifiable treatment of Registered Nurses as women. At the moment nearly all the powers-that-be appear against us—Royal College of Nursing, Ministry of Health, Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, and timorous members of the nursing profession. We, however, have faith in the future. When this war ends, at no distant date, it is to be hoped that a new era for women will arise, and that the present clique of petty autocrats who are now depriving women in Great Britain of advantages conceded to them, after the Great War will be swept away, peacefully maybe, but otherwise swept from power by the suppressed emotion of thousands of their fellow men and women whose methods may emulate the methods of humanity at bay.

One thing is certain, the contempt with which the rights of Registered Nurses have been treated by both English and Scottish Ministers must be purged before it can be forgotten.—ED.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

The Nurses' Pill.

A Rebel writes: "How is it that you can live with a person for years and know nothing of the inner man—or woman? Your paragraph on "Nurses' Politics," in this month's BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, interested us in this institution because we are none of us Communists here—as you would have realised had you been present in our room last week. We have amongst this staff a little staff nurse so demure she is known as "Mouse." Of politics she apparently has none, but she makes music and song, and presumably has political convictions hidden away.

"After reading Miss Dock's rousing letter, the 'Mouse' took the music-stool—we jumped when she downed the loud pedal and crashed out a new song with chorus:

" 'Bevin and Brown,
Bevin and Brown,
Down with them, down with them
Up with the Crown.'

"We were all soon whirling round singing the chorus, when the door opened and Home Sister came in to know what the excitement was, so we clasped hands and danced round her as Maypole. Down went the loud pedal, the 'Mouse' crashed out, and we sang the chorus:

" 'Bevin and Brown
Bevin and Brown,
Down with them, down with them
Up with the Crown.'

"So, you see, we still have a little spirit left in spite of 'The Nurses' Pill.'"

[If only these girls could go marching down Whitehall, from St. James' Square, led by the "Mouse," and bombard the Ministry of Health, what fun it would be; but, alas! such effective action is *verboten*—but we need not swallow "the Pill."—ED.]

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THE MIDWIFE.

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

As the work of skilled midwives is of the utmost importance to the nation at large, the examinations of the Central Midwives Board are of vital interest, so that a further supply of Certified Midwives may be available for the help of women who need them, and whose needs should be satisfied, which they are not at the present time. The forthcoming examinations of pupil midwives will be held in August and September next at the following centres—Birmingham, Leeds, Croydon, London, Bristol, Liverpool, Sheffield, Manchester and Newcastle-on-Tyne—and in other centres, if necessary.

THE DUTY OF PARENTS.

It is well known that Her Majesty the Queen is an admirable mother, interested in the duty of parents towards their children, especially in their physical, mental and moral health and control.

Thus it is only fair that mothers should receive all the care and help possible during pregnancy and delivery, to fit them for parenthood. It must be recognised that our Certified Midwives form a professional group of highly skilled women whose initiative must be encouraged by every means possible if our mothers are to benefit to the utmost from their invaluable service.

When shall we find them serving on the Central Midwives Board?

MORE MATERNITY BEDS.

Speaking recently at the reopening of a maternity unit of Queen Mary's Hospital for the East End, Miss Florence Horsbrugh, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Health, said that Queen Mary's was the first London hospital to be bombed, but it resolutely tackled all difficulties and within three weeks was again admitting patients.

The Margaret Lyle Maternity Wing, closed at the outbreak of war, was being reopened because the 3,500 additional maternity beds made available throughout the country had proved insufficient to meet the heavy war-time demands. The increased demand for maternity beds in hospitals was due partly to the rise in the birth-rate and partly to obstacles in the way of confinements at home—including the shortage of domestic help and overcrowding in certain areas.

About 630 beds had been opened in London during the past 18 months. More could be opened quickly, both in London and in the Provinces, if only more qualified midwives would practise their profession. No profession plays such a unique part as that of the midwives, who are in attendance at 90 per cent. of all births and in sole charge of 65 per cent.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

The National Council for Maternity and Child Welfare is extending the scope of its activities by the development of a bureau of information, available not only to its constituent societies but to other countries, and an extension of the library. Miss Somerville, until recently youth organiser for Croydon, has been appointed to take charge.

The joint Council of the Red Cross and St. John has made a grant of £500 a year for three years in order to encourage the scheme. The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, which generously lent Carnegie House to be the headquarters of the National Council, has given £1,950 towards the estimated deficit for 1943. Societies other than those already affiliated are being invited to join the National Council. Further funds are required, and contributions may be sent to the Hon. Treasurer at 117, Piccadilly, W.1.

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