CORRESPONDENCE.

EUGENICS AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM.

To the Editor of the EUGENICS REVIEW.

Sir,—It seems probable that before long proposals will be put before the country for educational changes of considerable importance. The debate in the House of Lords was not very illuminating, but a committee has been appointed to consider the question, and it seems clear that there is a strong feeling abroad that something should be done to widen and improve scientific education and increase the opportunities for technical education open to the artisan class.

These things may have a highly important eugenic bearing, and though the argument that this is so is familiar to many, it may be desirable to state it again.

The professional classes and skilled artisans have qualities which it is most important should be transmitted to future generations; in fact one would almost be inclined to single them out as being the most important sections of society, and yet there is evidence that they, more than most, are restricting the size of their families.

When we come to inquire into the cause for this, we find it is very largely that they have a standard of life which they consider it their duty to maintain, not only for themselves but for their children, and this they cannot see their way to do unless those children are very rigidly restricted in number.

Take the young professional man first. What is it that gives him cause to fear the expense of a good-sized family? It is not that he cannot feed and clothe them, it is that he will not be able to give them the education that will fit them to take their place in the world as members of the highly-trained professions. The changes in the incidence of direct taxation which this society is advocating will do much to ease his position, but there is no doubt that efficient scientific education, provided at moderate cost to intelligent children, would do a great deal also, and would open many professional careers which would otherwise be closed to those with small means.

In the same way with the artisan. His laudible ambition is that his children should have a start in the world as good as, or better than, he had himself.

If the State will provide free technical education to children able to profit by it, the skilled artisan will argue that his children will be among that number. Inheritance, early training and influence, and his ability to support them during a prolonged period of schooling, are all in their favour. The provision of such educational opportunities would relieve many of the anxieties which now make them restrict their families.

As the more intelligent children get into the highest standard at the primary schools at twelve or soon after, it would be a great advantage to them to be moved into technical schools, where, of course, general as well as technical education would be considered, a year or more before their compulsory school-period closed.

I wish to urge on all who are interested in eugenics that this is an opportunity which must on no account be lost of effecting something of really great eugenic importance. If legislation, when it comes, can be kept on selective lines, it is not too much to hope that we shall not only be giving scientific and technical education to a largely increased proportion of the population, but also very perceptibly increasing the number of children who are born into the world with a natural capacity to profit by such education.

WM. C. MARSHALL.