

Marian" has the happiness to possess what I do not—that is a good head of hair; and I'm ashamed to confess, although I hope I'm a good Nurse, I'm a bad hair-dresser, and am very thankful for a nice, clean, friendly cap to cover all deficiency. But we Nurses are one great unity, and though like clergymen we may differ on many small points, yet our one great aim is to be a help and comfort to our brothers and sisters in the time of their greatest need, and I felt quite grieved to find the one signing herself "Cappy, but not Hairless," should have made such an uncharitable remark in the end of her letter. The same St. Paul, which both parties have quoted, said, "Put on charity, which is the bond of perfection."—Yours faithfully,

NURSE A. B.

#### THE MATRON.

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

Sir,—I was much struck by the advice given by the Chairman of Committee to "Justice," and quoted by her in your columns last week. "Tact, tact, tact, dear madam, is what is wanted on your part to oil the wheels of your department." Now will some kind reader define this quality for me, as it is understood in the Institution world, as I also have been recommended to cultivate it by my fellow-workers? I have been a Hospital Matron, and doubtless had I possessed this charm of tact, might be so still. But like "Justice," my inclination was to "wire in" to existing abuses face to face, in preference to the more tactful plan of undermining the enemy. Has it ever struck my colleagues that, with but slight exaggeration, this much esteemed quality of tact may be very truly described as duplicity, subterfuge, humbug, and that the cultivation thereof is no easy matter to an honourable nature? A faint suspicion has sometimes crossed my mind that this may be so.—Yours faithfully,

PERPLEXITY.

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

Sir,—There was one very important matter touched upon by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick in her paper, "The Matron," concerning which no discussion was reported, and so far, of which no notice has been taken, and that is the question of "qualifying certificates," a most important question to Nurses. In the school where I was trained a most unsatisfactory system still prevails, and that is that the certificate, which should be a "public document granted by the Governing Body in its official capacity," is worth little more than a private testimonial, as it is filled in or qualified by one of the paid officials, and therefore becomes to a great extent "the expression of individual opinion." I have seen a certificate awarded by the authorities of the Royal Free Hospital, which appears to me an excellent document, and which might be adopted with advantage by more Nursing Schools than one.—Yours faithfully,

A STAFF NURSE.

[This is a subject which might be brought to the notice of the Governing Body of the Hospital alluded to. The day for "character certificates" such as are still used in some Workhouse Infirmaries, for domestic servants, as well as Nurses, is out of date for a Hospital which professes to have a Nursing School.—Ed.]

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

Sir,—I think the suggestion made in your issue of the 14th inst., that discussions should follow after the papers read at the meetings of the B.N.A., most excellent. Papers read *ex cathedra* (as it were) have not the interest that papers read avowedly for subsequent discussion would possess. The "debates" would give a *verve* and value to the meetings they now lack. There are countless subjects of interest to the Nursing world, that might most profitably and pleasantly be discussed in common. Not only should the papers read record Nursing work, but they should reflect Nursing thought. Whatever tends to exalt and purify the art of Nursing, whatever helps to raise the position and dignity of the Nurse, or contributes to her health, comfort, recreation or happiness, should be a matter of generous concern to every member of the Profession. At least such is the opinion of your correspondent.

JUSTITIA.

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

Sir,—The question raised by "G. R. A." and by "Matrona" in last week's issue is one of the utmost importance, not only to the immediate staff working under the Matron, but to the whole status and estimation of the Hospital in the eyes of the public.

In favour of canvassing it has been said that in a personal interview much information is gained that could be secured in no other way. Is this true? Is the information gained to the point? Is it gained by those who are best qualified to sift it?

I trust that the stronger sex will not be angry with me if I tell them that they are at a great disadvantage when it comes to an interview, with design at least on one side, between the two sexes; and it may so happen that the candidate who knows how to take advantage of this inequality, and is most skilled in the art of canvassing, wins the day on insufficient grounds. I have heard many of the higher class of Matrons inveigh bitterly against the custom. They feel it is humiliating, they acknowledge its unreality, and they know that unless they can bring influence and interest to work on their behalf they are going through an empty farce.

The whole question is beset with difficulties, and the initial error seems to me advertising the vacancy in the first instance; this brings in a crowd of most unsuitable applicants, and often deters very fit people from applying for the post. A *bona fide* vacancy soon circulates through the profession when once the need occurs, and the large *clientele* of a Hospital has many means at its command to make its vacancy known. If advertising is resorted to, let it be confined to strictly professional mediums. Then let *all* canvassing be regarded as a disqualifying action. The candidates having applied, let their antecedents be sifted in the arena of their previous occupation, and that by someone competent to make inquiries and to test the evidence; let there be no wire-pulling, but let the candidates each stand or fall on their own merits.

Undoubtedly mistakes will be made—no human system is free from this infirmity; but I unhesitatingly state that sufficient care and circumspection is not exercised by the governing bodies of our Hospitals in seeking the most fit persons for these important

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)