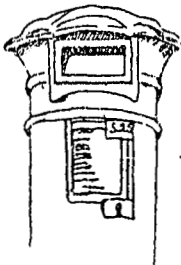


book is to follow the author. He departs from his subject so suddenly that it requires a mental gymnastic effort to follow him. Take, for example, the following consecutive sentences:—"Water forms the chief part of those secretions which play such an important part in digestion, viz., the saliva, gastric juice and bile, besides being the chief factor in removing impurities from the body. It also forms the greater part of the blood, and is, therefore, a most important constituent in the human economy. There is no question in our social economy more urgent and important than the water supply of London, which, at the present time, is most unsatisfactory." Then follows a disquisition on Thames sewage. And this habit of darting off at tangents is the most marked characteristic of this book.



Letters to the Editor.

(Notes, Queries, &c.)

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.

AN ARMY RESERVE OF NURSING SISTERS.

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

MADAM,—I would be glad of room in your paper to point out the need of organising for service with our Army in the field a *Reserve of Nursing Sisters*, who, in times of any severe campaign, could be fallen back upon for help and assistance in the Base Hospitals and Hospital Ships of an army in the field. So far back as December, 1885, I circulated many hundred circulars amongst the Nursing profession on this head; but, having to go on foreign service soon after, I was unable to pursue the matter further. There should be no difficulty in organising, with London as a centre and headquarters, a selected Reserve Corps of Nursing Sisters, to whom we could look as a body of available helpers in any special emergency in the field. We have to-day the Army Nursing Sisters employed as Sisters in our Military Hospitals; but what I suggest is that a "Reserve" behind them be formed, in the same way that the Army Reserve is behind the Army. To do this, it would be necessary in peace time, when ample leisure exists, to form the nucleus of such a corps; lay down rules for its guidance; select and medically examine its candidates, classify and grade them; and arrange for periodical meetings, where a general description of Army work could be given, and the future Nursing Sisters make acquaintance with each other, and develop an *esprit de corps*. So long as no representative body existed who could form a central headquarters for such a movement, there was some difficulty in this work; there is none to-day, as the R.B.N.A. could easily carry out the work, and come to terms with the War Office as to pay, pension, outfit allowance, bonus, etc., and so have the matter cut and dried in the times of peace, to avoid the hurry and confusion of organising in war and its excitement; and the Nurses so chosen would remain during peace in their ordinary employment, and be liable to call only in war time.

Two distinct bodies of Nurses are needed, to my mind. First, an active reserve of able-bodied and strong young Nurses, in perfect health and fitness, ready for any climate or any duty, with the Regular Army in the Base Hospitals and the Hospital Ships; and, secondly, local bodies of "Volunteer Nursing Sisters" formed locally over the country, and in touch with the Volunteer Medical Staff Corps as the "Reserve Sisters" would be with the Regular Medical Staff Corps.

It is absolutely essential that these steps be taken, to guard us from an invasion of sham Nurses, without training or knowledge, who would rush in upon us in the hurry and confusion of a campaign, to do infinite injury to real Nursing.

Sham Nurses.—It is resolved to protest in a very clear and definite way against a class now developing of "Sham Nurses," wearing the dress of Nurses, and absolutely without training. I have met them on public occasions, and I protest very thoroughly against such a distinct imposition.

The true way to beat them out of the field is to get the Nursing profession, as a body, to form a reserve of real Nurses, and then offer their services to the State. It would do much to bind together the Nursing Sisters of England, and give cohesion to their organisation.

I speak now of "Sisters," that is, supervising and directing Nurses, because we want in war time our own Medical Staff Corps of trained *Male* orderlies to do all the first aid, gathering in of wounded, organization of Bearer Companies, Field Hospitals, and Communication Hospitals. On them too, would devolve much of the Nursing work, at the Base Hospital, but Sisters would be needed to supervise, and to share in the execution of these duties.

The more the Nursing profession understands, of the labours and the work of our Field Hospitals, the more they will be able to sympathize with us, in our efforts at efficiency, and the more they can educate the public as to our needs and ideals. I am pained to find how absolutely little, many Nurses know of our war work, although it is by far, the most exhausting and the most specialized of Ambulance and Nursing work.

From want of knowledge there is a want of sympathy, and hence we and they lose the benefit of conjoint action. I venture to say that if the very interesting story of our field medical organisation could be told to hospital sisters and civil Nurses, they would be deeply interested in it. It is a story of evolution and a struggle for efficiency against great difficulties. We need in that struggle the sympathy of the Nursing profession as a whole, and that sympathy would find its highest expression in the formation of a Corps of "Reserve Nursing Sisters," linked to ours by common knowledge and common aims, and I beg you will allow the subject to be ventilated in your columns. It would be possible in your pages to give, in a few columns, such a sufficiently clear outline of our field medical organization as to let your ordinary Nurse readers understand it.—Yours,

GEORGE EVATT.

[As we said, last week, we took some interest in this matter some years ago, and will gladly open our columns for a discussion of this subject. We cordially approve of our correspondent's suggestion, and will next week devote space to its consideration.—ED.]

PRIVATE NURSES.

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

MADAM,—I am glad to see that in your editorial remarks of the 17th and 24th inst., you have drawn attention to the very serious matter of depriving trained Nurses of all personal responsibility of action, and in consequence of judgment by the paternal committees of some of our Nurse Training Schools. Such action on the part of committees is not only regrettable, but disastrous to the true and best development of our future Nurses. We, the dependant public, want a nurse who is "a self-respecting, conscientious, and reliable human being," and not an irresponsible machine. I speak feelingly as mother and wife, who has at one time and another

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