



## 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.*

### DO NURSES SMOKE CIGARETTES?

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

MADAM,—I feel sure all your readers will sympathise with the feeling which impelled "Materfamilias" to ask the question in last week's issue, "Do Nurses Smoke Cigarettes?" But, at the same time, are not her conclusions and is not her argument a little illogical? She sees a young woman in Nurse's uniform reclining in a boat on the Thames, laughing loudly in concert with *two* young men. This certainly is very reprehensible, although it would have been even *more* shocking had there been but *one* young man. The spirits of youth are buoyant—excesses are the natural result of repression—and who is to know if the unseemly young person in question was not a vigorous young Probationer out for her *monthly* day's holiday, in company with her noisy cubs of brothers. There is nothing unseemly, of course, in the boisterous youths appearing in sketchy garments and enjoying intensely their "baccy" in the ample briar wood pipes of their own cutting; the comfort, the latitude, the licence granted to the male sex as a right degenerates into a crime in the equally human, sanguine, and restricted sister; and because she wears a Nurse's uniform, *all* Nurses are vulgar (for vulgarity consists in lack of innate courtesy), and the daughter of *such* a "Materfamilias" is lost to the Nursing profession! Personally, I don't smoke, although I am a Nurse (but I know of some very delightful ones that, in the privacy of their own nook, do so indulge), simply because I don't like it; and, as I maintain that self-control is the most necessary quality in a Nurse, it is dangerous to succumb to habits. One thing, of course, is quite apparent from "Materfamilias," letter: Why on the river in uniform? No costume could be more inappropriate—the flopping cloak and shadeless bonnet! I imagine this Nurse must have emanated from a Hospital whose rule concerning costume (not fitness) is of the Medes and Persians, and the regulation of which is, that its Nursing staff shall always appear in uniform—even on the "half day"—and if her dress is a distinct drawback to innocent pleasure and freedom. I have heard of a Hospital Sister who evaded this regulation by going demurely out of the front door of her Hospital in flowing cloak and veil, and who changed this chaste apparel for *evening dress* at the Porter's Lodge!!! But I shall horrify "Materfamilias."—Yours,

"A STAID STAFF NURSE."

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

MADAM,—"Materfamilias" is disgusted, and expresses her intention of refusing to allow her daughter to enter a Hospital lest she might be tainted by coming into contact with a cigarette-smoking Nurse. Has "Materfamilias" reflected that were she to enrol her son as a medical student that he would spend a large part of his time in smoking, billiard-playing, and frequenting music-halls? The mothers who are horrified at the least freedom in their daughters have no hesitation in providing their sons with money which certainly often results in a leading into temptation. Why are men to absorb all professions, all amusements, and all privileges, and why should the daughters be refused a harmless whiff of tobacco?

"A 'NEW WOMAN' WHO ENJOYS A CIGARETTE."

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

MADAM,—Your correspondent who "refuses to allow her daughter Hospital training," after having witnessed unseemly conduct on the part of a Nurse, is allowing herself to take a one-sided view of the matter, which gives rise to prejudice against Nursing as a profession. There are always found in *every* profession, some who are uncreditable, and whose conduct is unworthy of their calling. The Nursing profession is no exception in this, and the Nurse your correspondent refers to, must be one of these. All Nurses who respect themselves and their calling (and I who am among their ranks, know them to be many), will agree that the conduct of the Nurse in question deserves severe censure, being a disgrace to the woman who practised it, and bespeaking an entire unsuitability for the vocation adopted. I should just like to point out this fact, that though, in all our large London training schools, the discipline and etiquette for all members of the Nursing staff is plainly laid down, and strictly carried out, it necessarily follows that *outside* the Hospital gates, a Nurse is responsible to *herself* for her behaviour, the Hospital authorities taking for granted that all members of their Nursing staff comport themselves as gentlewomen. A woman who could set at defiance all those unwritten, but generally adopted, rules for conduct that the dignity of our calling demands, shows herself unworthy of her position, and sets an example that all self-respecting members of the Nursing profession would turn away from in disgust.—Yours,

NURSE A.

### "THE MASQUERADERS."

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

MADAM,—Not only are cigarettes but "Nurses' uniform" becoming a "burning" question, and some drastic measures will have to be adopted, to curtail its degradation. First of all, there is Regent Street and Piccadilly! I have of late been doing a little amateur detective work, out of consideration for my cloth; and there are two women who frequent these districts, whose horrible henna-tinted heads and painted faces, are decorated with fetching bright blue and white Marie Stuart Nursing bonnets, well cut modish cloaks, and flowing veils. *These masqueraders are not Nurses.* Who is going to tackle this new abuse, and insult to our profession? Is it not possible to prosecute these shams? Then again, here in the medical West End district, a hybrid creation of the economical surgeon is looming large. She is dubbed the "Nurse Parlour maid," and apparently to the passer by, she appears an interesting object. Dressed in full Nursing uniform (I have seen both the London and Bartholomew's Sisters caps so desecrated), she answers the door with a veritable "spider to the fly" smile. I presume indoors she officiates as "trained assistant." Anyway, she again comes forth and speeds the parting guest, tucking in the carriage rug, and handing in umbrella and bag. Is this new species a trained Nurse, or another sham? And yet another "type." From Queen Anne Street, unto Harley Street, I yesterday followed a damsel down at the heel, with a gaping wound in her stocking, a rusty black merino gown, and much befrilled apron—yet, how are the mighty fallen! with the simple white nursing cap *tied under the chin*, until lately sacred, from 'Arriet and her imitative faculty. I imagine from the general bedraggled of this damsel, that she was, what is known in restricted professional houses as the "ups and downs." When it comes to "strings under the chin," the last distinctive feature is wrested from us. I humbly commit these Masqueraders to the tender mercies of the Council of the R.B.N.A.—Yours,

"A TRAINED NURSE."

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

MADAM,—I very much regret to have to confess that a hospital uniform cannot be taken seriously. It seems the custom now-a-days to regard a Nurse's uniform as a becoming

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