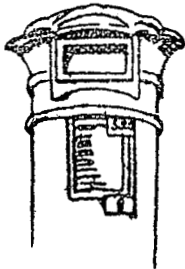


uniformity it is claimed are equally secured by the use of these productions, seeing that only a definite quantity need be used; that extravagance from wastefulness is therefore prevented; and that the same quantity of tabloid will always produce an exactly uniform strength of the beverage. The price of these tabloids is remarkably small, as one hundred are sold for sixpence, and that number would certainly produce about fifty breakfast cups of tea. We have tried these tabloids, and the quality of the tea which they produce is certainly all that could be desired. Another advantage, to which the manufacturers do not call attention, but which appears to us to be of great importance, is that of *portability*. Many a time when travelling abroad, we have suffered from the impossibility of obtaining a good cup of tea, and in future we shall certainly guard against this, as we should advise other travellers to do, by taking with us a supply of these excellent tabloids. To be able to carry sufficient for 100 cups of tea in one's pocket, is an advantage which many travellers, and all Nurses, will realise and value.



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.

SHOULD NURSES BE POLITICIANS?

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I have followed, with much interest, the correspondence in your columns on the subject of Nurses and Politics; but not being privileged to form part of the charmed circle of Nurses, I have hesitated to say anything lest I should betray in every line a lamentable ignorance of the difficulties, traditions, and peculiarities of a Nurse's position. If therefore, my remarks should appear impracticable, I beg you to understand they are only put forward as humble suggestions.

Now, why in the name of all that is politic should any class of women—and, including Nurses, who, I am told, are extravagantly Conservative—not do their utmost to reform the abuses, anomalies, discrepancies, and inconsistencies which, in the course of time, have crept into the Parliamentary and Municipal Government of the country? The question is not merely getting a vote, and nothing more. The vote is little beyond the husk. But its possession by anyone enables him or her to give voice to the wrongs, and desires of the class to which he or she belongs. A labouring man cannot be expected to know the grievances of the medical profession; nor can a man fully appreciate all that relates to women and children; though we sincerely believe the majority chivalrously desire to do their best. The excuse that they do not always succeed is that they are men and not women.

The words "blue" and "frump" have been used by one of your correspondents as designations that have somehow adhered to Women Suffragists. When people are at a loss for sound argument with which to oppose new ideas, or newly-discovered truth, they generally have recourse to caricature, abuse and ridicule. All I can say is, that the Women Suffragists I have come across, either at public or private meetings, show an admirable partiality for pretty bonnets, pretty dresses, and charming manners. They try to dress well, and, if some few fail, it is merely because they were not born with the artistic faculty. Those women who who are in any degree "bluish" or "frumpish" are usually numbered among the friends of whom one longs to make enemies.

Women Suffragists get their full share of admiration from the opposite sex. They enjoy one another's society; and the man has the additional pleasure of feeling that in talking to a sensible woman his courteous behaviour or kindly attention will not be construed into "ulterior motives." When a man becomes a soldier, he still possesses the good or bad qualities inherent in him. His training, it is hoped, will strengthen the good and stamp out the bad. A woman, when she becomes a Suffragist, is still a woman possessing the qualities good or bad belonging to her sex generally, and to her own personal character in particular. She is the same woman as before, plus the awakening that she has the ability to undertake not only domestic house-keeping, but a little political house-keeping as well. If a woman was attractive to the opposite sex before she became a Suffragist, she certainly will not lose her charms after that event.

But when it comes to canvassing in the wards, I should decidedly oppose such a proceeding. In the first place, no Nurse should use working hours for any other object than that for which she is paid. Discipline could not be maintained in any large Institution, unless this was distinctly recognised. It is a rule strenuously adhered to in every Civil Service Department of the Kingdom. During working hours they are servants without opinions. They must not canvass among their fellow-workers, and a postman, I believe, must not even canvass among those on his "walk." But when off duty, Civil Servants may enjoy the privileges of ordinary citizens. They may attend meetings, and, if their qualifications are sufficient, may vote for candidates to various offices. Imagine the corruption that would creep in if political opinion was allowed to have influence in the civil departments of the Government. Apply the same thing to a Hospital. Suppose a Matron to be an ultra-Radical, even unconsciously her sympathies would go out to those under her who held the same views, to the exclusion of those among her colleagues who held diverse political views.

But look at the matter from the patient's points of view. A patient owes much, often life itself, to the care of the Nurse, and would, therefore, in a weak moment, sacrifice many cherished political opinions. For my part, were I ill, and my Nurse came round with a petition, I fear a mortal terror would induce me to sign adherence to anything from the thirty-nine articles to a profession of loyalty to the Czar of Russia, lest, if I refused, she should take revenge by waking me up half-a-dozen times at night to give me a nauseous draught, or frighten me into fits by suddenly presenting a stethoscope at me, which in the dim light looks painfully like a pistol.

Joking apart, Matrons, Sisters and Nurses can do untold good by contributing their professional knowledge to the forward and upward movements of the day. But let them do it through the agencies already existent in the country. Your Matrons' Council can do much. The Matrons themselves, perhaps, hardly realise how much—not only to make the grievances of their own profession heard, by the outside world, but the grievances of women and children everywhere.

—Yours truly,

W. HOGARTH.

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