

Act of Parliament for Nurses, at a cost of £1,000 probably, *i.e.*, if the Bill is allowed to pass without opposition, and treble that sum or more if it is not, worth the making? Yes! I think it is. There is something to gain and nothing to lose.

At the same time I cannot help thinking that in Membership of the Royal British Nurses' Association there is a public passport of good nursing for the whole world, if only the Association is managed on the lines of a Corporation granting degrees. I, however, am not competent to speak on such a matter, for I know little or nothing of the constitution of the Association, and in fact, my first introduction to the subject of legislation for Nurses was through the columns of your last week's NURSING RECORD.

To conclude as I began, my object in writing this letter has been to point out that not too much good is to be expected to flow from any Act of Parliament, even if Nurses are likely to be so extremely fortunate as to obtain one in the near future.

I am, yours truly,
A CANDID FRIEND.

January 13th, 1896.

NURSES AND NEWSPAPERS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I am very glad that you have called attention in the RECORD to the ignorance on the part of many Nurses of the great events which stir nations: and that you are going to chronicle some of these events in the RECORD. I regard it as quite impossible to expect professional progress and high ideals in their work from Nurses who are not interested in the progress of the world they live in.

I happened to criticise to one of my Nurses the recent action of the German Emperor in relation with the Transvaal, when to my amazement I found she had not even heard that there was any trouble in the Transvaal. I at once ordered, at my own expense, a daily Radical and Conservative newspaper for the Nurses' sitting-room.

Truly yours,
A READING SISTER.

A STANDARD OF AGE FOR NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—As no one has replied to the question of "Medicus" in the issue of the 4th inst., as to why doctors and patients appear to prefer young Nurses, I will give him the value for what it is worth of my own experience. Doctors usually prefer young Nurses fresh from the Training Schools, because they are up-to-date in modern methods of Nursing, although there is no doubt that they are often very crude in the management of the individual patient, and are often very lacking in tact in the management of friends and servants. I quite agree with "a Nurse of thirty-six," that the "smart" element in Nursing often "takes" with medical men in preference to more solid and valuable qualities. Patients, again, are usually more or less depressed when ill, and a bright young Nurse, full of animal spirits, may be irritating to a few, but there is no doubt that they have the effect of cheering up sick persons, and to be interested and amused, certainly takes their minds off their own ailments. It is the same in the sick-room as in the world, the greatest crime in a man's estimation that a woman can commit is to be *dull* and *dowdy*. Wives do not care for young Nurses, and no wonder; it is both more decent and satisfactory in every way to feel that the care of a sick husband should be in the hands of a woman over thirty-five, but when ill themselves, women certainly much prefer a "daughterly" to a "motherly" Nurse, and this is but natural.

But this correspondence does not solve the great and very pressing question of how we older Nurses are to earn our bread with the ever increasing competition in the Nursing world. It is a very, very serious and terrible question, and we all know of cases where Nurses nearing fifty find it quite impossible to get Nursing work, and who are, therefore,

in very sad circumstances. Would these workers be included in any scheme which the Government may eventually organise of Old Age Pensions? Surely the work of these worthy women has been of as great value to the body politic as many male industrial workers. Would this be the sort of thing which a National Council of Women could represent to the Government? We women are human beings, many of us pay taxes, and we must, therefore, have our necessities taken into consideration in the future more than they have been in the past.

Yours,
SARAH ANN SMITH.

DO NURSES AGE EARLIER THAN OTHER WOMEN?

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Having followed the interesting discussion under the headings "Live and Let Live," as to the age when Nurses are at their best, I feel that the only logical conclusion we can arrive at on the subject, is that Nurses must grow old sooner than any other class of professional or working women.

Looking round on women who earn their own livelihood, I am struck by the fact that in no other calling are they considered "past their work" at the early age of forty. And yet this appears to be the almost unanimous feeling with regard to Nurses, that most of their energy, enthusiasm and fitness mysteriously and suddenly deserts them at the age of thirty-nine.

Now let us consider some of the other professions, and compare. It is certain that actresses do not wear out and lose their capability at forty. Most of them have hardly reached their prime at that age, while we know that there are numberless instances that might be cited to show that many actresses at sixty are able to dance and skip about the stage with sprightliness and youth.

And the stage cannot be considered to be a healthy occupation. Late hours, excitement, want of sleep, irregular meals, are the daily accompaniments of an actress's life.

And they endure great hardships when they are "on tour," especially when short runs of two to three nights are made in the various "stopping-off" towns.

Singers and music teachers do not "go off" at forty, as is evidenced by Madame Patti, who is still the premier vocalist, and by many celebrated professors of music who will never see fifty again.

Then let us turn to medical women, to say nothing of medical men whose services are generally only beginning to be valued when they reach forty—there is certainly all sign of lasting vigour in the women practitioners in London, some of whom are long past forty. They perform splendid operations, they "do" their long rounds, lecture, write books, are called up at night and lead much harder lives than Nurses, without exhibiting any flagging of their energies at what appears to be considered the age of decadence in the Nursing Profession.

I trust that others will give us their valuable experiences on this most interesting subject.

Sincerely yours,
A WORKING WOMAN OF FIFTY.

Comments and Replies.

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE ruling of the Chairman at the General Council Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association on the 10th inst., in forbidding discussion by the Governing Body of the Corporation concerning the Report from the Executive Committee, is so serious a matter, that the Editor begs to inform her correspondents that no letters on the subject will be inserted in the NURSING RECORD unless they are fully signed by the members.

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