



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.

NURSES À LA MODE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—My attention having been drawn to an article in the *Nineteenth Century* entitled *Nurses à la Mode*, I, as a member of the grossly-maligned profession, cannot resist writing to inform all those who are interested in our work, how unfair a stigma has been cast upon those who little deserve it. For, in truth, private nursing is anything but a bed of roses. Care is taken by Acts of Parliament, &c., that the working-man should not work more than a given period, but what an upstir would be raised if he were subjected to our treatment, when in most cases we often have to be on our feet at least sixteen hours, and even more, should our patient require it; and as the majority of us have consciences, (although the writer of the article would even refuse us this) we care not to get any rest, so long as we can be of service to those entrusted to our charge. Even those black sheep, the *giddy* nurses, would act in the same manner. Another charge against us is that of frivolity and undue desire to mingle in the gaieties of the world. For my own part, I do not see why we should be expected to carry our patients' troubles and ailments about with us, any more than medical men do. I feel sure that whatever little relaxation we can obtain comes as a balm to an overtaxed brain, and I am convinced that the majority of patients much prefer a smiling and good-tempered face to a woe-begone and perhaps a hypocritical countenance. Let only those who have tried the ordeal be the persons to find fault with us. They would be the first to acknowledge how necessary, both to patients and nurses, are innocent amusements, so cruelly condemned by the writer. And, even if we are seen only smiling in the streets, we are at once put down as being fast or giddy, where any other person would not be noticed. At the best of times we have no opportunity of changing our uniform, so short a space is allotted to us even for common recreation.

As regards having meals with servants, I am convinced I am right in insisting that the motive with which we are charged is unfair, as, though many of us are no doubt their superiors in birth, we do not object to mix with them from this cause, but because we prefer to take our meals alone, as we can thus obtain a little extra rest, and also be freed from the tiresome questioning to which we should be subjected on the condition of our patients, &c.; an ordeal which none of us care to face.

As to the ever-recurring theme that nursing is associated with matrimonial prospects, I can assure you that such a subject is a sickening one to most of us, nor are we likely to care about it when we have ocular proof from time to time how much so-called

"bliss" is attainable among married couples. Rather, much rather, would we continue nurses all our lives than lead the lives apportioned to some of those with whom we come in contact. As to the courts of law, where you see one nurse's name you will find hundreds of others who ought to know better.

Again, we may begin our nursing career with fairly good looks, but unfortunately it is not our lot to retain them long, owing to the hard work, high temperature of the sick room, and, it may be, occasional attacks of infectious diseases.

We are also told that many of our patients are young men, but this is seldom the case, as the majority of our male patients are old men, whose language is, to say the least, anything but polite. But then a nurse ought not to have any feelings, but, in embracing her profession, she ought to leave behind her all natural feelings; and, if she were to show but a glimpse of them, ought at once to be driven out as unworthy of such a grand profession.

In conclusion, I fear that, if Lady Priestley's article should fall into the hands of inexperienced persons, we may perhaps meet with worse treatment than we at times get; for amongst a certain class, even now, we are treated as necessary nuisances and not as human beings, who ought to have dealt out to them the same treatment which the commonest of mortals deem their due.

Apologising for these lengthy remarks, I am,
AN INDIGNANT NURSE.
C. G.

A PUBLIC QUESTION.

Adjutant-General's Hut, Aldershot,
February 15th, 1897.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM—Having recently made the acquaintance of your able journal, the *NURSING RECORD*, and followed the correspondence therein with no small interest, I would fain say a few words as from one who has—in years gone by—owed much to careful nursing. As regards the double-barrelled attack from Lady Priestley and Mr. Hall Caine, "the nurses" appear to me to have taken the matter a little too seriously. For, like most other such onslaughts, the net result will be in favour of the attacked. For one "flighty" nurse any thinking man (or woman) can call to mind, he (or she) will surely recall a score of members of the heroic band of women *worthy* to be called "trained nurses." The other bone of contention, *i.e.*, the proposal to allow "asylum attendants" to become members of the Royal British Nurses' Society, and to be enrolled on their Register, appears to me to concern possible patients and possible *clients*, as it were, of the Society, in a manner only second to the members themselves.

For does not our belief in a "registered nurse" rest originally on the knowledge that, besides being well conducted, she *must* have received a thorough and "all round" hospital training?

Why, then, seek to disturb the sense of security now conveyed by the words "registered nurse" to those who know this excellent Association?

Yours faithfully,
CHARLOTTE TALBOT COKE.

[We entirely agree with our correspondent that the questions she discusses are of paramount importance to the public—the interests of the nurses and the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)