

THE ROYAL RED CROSS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—The Order of the Royal Red Cross was instituted fifteen years ago by Her Majesty the Queen, for "zeal and devotion in providing for, and nursing sick and wounded sailors, soldiers, and others, with the army in the field, on board ship, or in hospitals." This Order has, so far, only been bestowed upon women; it is presumable, therefore, that the Queen, instituting it, contemplated that Nursing Sisters would, as a matter of course, take their place "with the army in the field." Why, therefore, are Nursing Sisters, as in the recent Soudan campaign, to be confined to the base hospitals? Even the hospital steamer—for the conveyance of the wounded from Assouan to Cairo—being equipped and nursed by a charitable society. Are the Army Sisters never in the future to have the opportunity of nursing the sick in the field hospitals, or of gaining the R.R.C. for this reason? It is extraordinary how strongly men seem to object to women getting any decoration, and indeed for various classes of men to object to decorations being given to others outside the profession, to which they belong. For instance, the Victoria Cross was instituted as a reward "for conspicuous bravery." Now the bravery of some of our Army Surgeons in the Tirah, and Soudan Campaigns has certainly been "conspicuous," yet I read the other day that the Commander-in-Chief holds that it was not contemplated, when the Order was instituted that it should be given to medical men. Are we to understand from this that the virtue of bravery is confined to the Army? Even so the medical men who serve in the Army rank as officers, and in their capacity as such should surely be qualified to receive it. However, I have no doubt medical men can look after their own interests in this particular. I shall be interested to see what happens.

Yours truly, OBSERVER.

BLACK AND WHITE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was very glad to see that in your last issue you advocated the claims of a coloured nurse to obtain nursing experience which would qualify her to organise nursing amongst the people in her own country. It must have required no small amount of "pluck" on Miss Woodbine's part to come to this country and obtain her certificate. I wonder how many English nurses would expatriate themselves, and go to live in a foreign country, where in many instances they were plainly shown that their presence was resented, for a similar reason. It is high time, I think, that we got rid of all this prejudice about colour, or imagined that there is some vast superiority in a white skin over a black one. The best cure for such ideas is to travel about the world a little. One finds, then, that human nature is much the same all the world over, and that, given the same opportunities, a black man or woman is quite as capable of doing good work as a white one. But we shut ourselves up in this small island—often in an extremely limited section of it—and then we preen ourselves on the ridiculous notion that no nation, except our own, is any good. Does not the same kind of feeling inspire the idea, so prevalent amongst nurses, that no nurses who were not trained at the institution to which they belong are "trained." Does a nurse exist who has not met with, even if she has not been inspired by, this idea. I hardly think so.

Small wonder then, that we have little sympathy for our coloured sisters, and to our shame be it said are so unready to hold out a helping hand to them. When will English women—English nurses—rise to a sense of their responsibilities? I hope the coming International Congress of women will help us forward somewhat in this direction.

Yours faithfully, JUSTICE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

SIR,—Will you kindly spare me space in your NURSING RECORD to say I think the "Plea for Equality" most unfair, for how would any English woman stoop to be a under-nurse taking orders from a black woman. Let her be charge nurse over her own people, as I for one, and there are others, I know, would deem it as insult to be put to work even on an equality with her, let alone to be an under nurse. She must not expect any English Nurse to work under her. Trusting no Matron but a black one will try to get her appointed as charge nurse.

A ENGLISH GIRL.

[We have omitted from this letter one harsh and unkindly sentence. "A English Girl" has evidently not discovered that the Editor of THE NURSING RECORD is a trained nurse.—Ed.]

A QUESTION.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Could you kindly tell me whether any institution exists for training Matrons, not of hospitals, but for such posts as orphanages, blind asylums, etc. I enquire for a lady, hitherto a governess, so without the practical knowledge of household duties needed for a Matronship. At present she is Assistant Matron at a blind asylum, but is anxious to equip herself properly, by being trained for a better post as Matron.

You will forgive my asking a question which is rather apart from "NURSING RECORD" lines.

Believe me, yours truly,

67, Ladbroke Grove, W.

H. M. BEWES.

[The Secretary of the Women's Institute, 15, Grosvenor Crescent, Hyde Park Corner, might be able to furnish information on this subject. Perhaps some of our readers also may be able to advise our correspondent.—Ed.]

ESPRIT DE CORPS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I notice that you comment on the failure of the Nursing Section at the Health Exhibition, in Birmingham, in your last issue. It was most deplorable certainly, but if the Matrons of the City Hospitals had been invited to organise it, I wonder what the result would have been. So far, Birmingham Matrons stand very much aloof from one another professionally. Somehow, the Matrons of the big hospitals do not take the initiative in inviting those of the smaller institutions to combine with them about public matters, and the less important Matrons are naturally shy of putting themselves forward, so every one waits for some one else, with the result that this progressive city is most behind-hand in professional organization, although, individually, the Matrons are doing excellent work in their own institutions. It seems to me that what the Nursing Profession needs, all over the country, as well as in Birmingham, is *esprit de corps*. Until, like men, we are able to sink smaller considerations, and to combine for our own professional advancement, so long shall we continue to be "sport for foies and food for knaves." Yours faithfully, BRUMMAGEM.

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