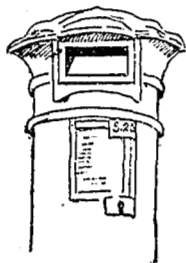


Letters to the Editor.

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.

"NURSE ISABEL."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I am much obliged to you for bringing to the notice of your readers the study of a nurse in Miss Harraden's new book. As you say, it affords food for reflection, and, moreover, I think we must all acknowledge that we have met nurses who are the "very moral" of Nurse Isabel, good hearted, well meaning enough, but absolutely unsuitable for the vocation they have chosen.

And do we not all know the medical men depicted also? We have so many fair-weather friends; but adverse criticism comes, we look around for them, and, heigh presto, not one is in sight, they have vanished like snow in summer; we find we must trust to our own resources. And then, when we have weathered the storm, and come out on the other side, we find our "friends" once more awaiting us in crowds. Miss Harraden, I should say, knows both her medical and nursing world well. One almost thinks she must have been nursed herself by a Nurse Isabel, she has studied the part so thoroughly.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
A MODERN NURSE.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Miss Beatrice Harraden has evidently observed the modern nurse and the West-End physician on the spot, and we may gather many lessons from her brilliant book, "The Fowler." For nurses, it appears to me, the chief lesson should be the benefit of professional association, as the position of being at the beck and call of a few doctors only, with no co-operation at their back, is indeed a very dangerous one. Medical men are very timorous where their patients are concerned, and many private nurses, besides "Nurse Isabel," have suffered great injustice from malicious reports, sometimes by patients, who expect a superhuman creature in the "trained nurse," and resent most unreasonably to find her a human being, with a natural capacity for food, fresh air, and sleep. I have heard of cases of the sort in which private nurses working "on their own account" have literally had to remain on duty on major operations night and day for upwards of a week, living on snacks of food, and snatches of sleep, because the medical man's "system" of nursing abdominal operations prohibited the employment of more than one nurse. This sort of slavery goes on for a certain time, and then the nurse begins to cheat her employer, and behind his back does sleep; poor thing, how can she help it, and she and the patient enter into a compact to keep the doctor "in the

dark"; or the patient resents her disregard of orders, and complains to the doctor that the nurse is unfaithful and does actually sleep—and snores heavily—and the nurse is quietly shunted for a fresh one, and the old farce begins all over again. Now, no nurse should be absolutely dependent upon the whims of either doctor or patient, and in self-defence she should join an association of nurses, where the interests of doctor, nurse and patient are all justly considered. It is not dignified or professional for a medical man to make himself responsible for the personal conduct of the nurse, and inevitably leads to friction—he is wise to employ nurses who are co-operated under a well qualified professional woman, who must be held responsible by him for the good conduct and efficiency of the nursing staff; he will then only have to give the nurse directions for the treatment and comfort of his patient, and will refuse to enter into petty disputes and personal matters. Sick people are fanciful, and often inconsistent, and they find fault with the nurse one day and the doctor the next. Nursing should be professionally controlled by nurses, and doctors should demand the highest moral and educational standard, and be satisfied with nothing less. But to descend into the arena, and enter into contests with the nurses, from whom they must exact obedience and respect, is impossible. The British Nurses' Association rows have proved the mistake of such tactics.

Yours truly,
CO-OPERATION.

EFFICIENT TRAINING.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I am astonished to see that in the case recently reported by you of the action of a nurse for damages for breach of contract, that a medical man gave it as his opinion that a pupil, after seeing three maternity cases, could attend any natural case of the kind. What a howl of medical indignation we should raise—and rightly—if we midwives ventured upon such a statement.

I am, Madam,
Yours faithfully,
SUPERINTENDENT.

STRAIGHT FOR THE GOLD.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—The most inspiring thing which I have read for some time is the account of the feeling exhibited at the Annual Council of the Women's Liberal Federation, when Lady Grove proposed her notable resolution. It proves that the issue is narrowing down, that those who mean *business* in the matter of obtaining women's suffrage are drawing closer together, and that those who mean play, personal aggrandisement, political expediency, or any other trash will stand out more or less as marked women. When we have gained this we have gained much. We want to know friends from foes, who may be depended upon, and who will fail when the battle begins in real earnest. But the attitude of mind of these "liberal" women amazes me. Fancy working for a man who classes you with lunatics, paupers, and criminals!

Yours truly,
REASON.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)