

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.

THE INFANT NURSING PRODIGY.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I feel sure hundreds of Nightingale nurses—at this moment just as they have been congratulating Miss Nightingale on the auspicious occasion of her eightieth birthday—will have read as I did with amazement and indignation the statement made by Sir Henry Burdett before a meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association, that he, in conjunction with Mrs. Wardroper, the late Matron of St. Thomas's Hospital, "initiated" the modern system of nurse training. We "Nightingales" were always under the impression that the great woman whose name is perpetuated in the title of our school "initiated" the system of training at St. Thomas's Hospital, and I for one beg to protest most vigorously against Sir Henry Burdett's statement, as it is an insult to the genius of Miss Nightingale, our great Founder, and also to all those pioneers who were working for the welfare of the sick when Sir Henry Burdett was in his cradle.

It is quite time this Burdett bubble was exploded, and it is to be hoped that the Nightingale Committee will take some steps to refute Sir Henry Burdett's claim to have had anything to do with the nursing of St. Thomas's Hospital. The organ of the Royal British Nurses' Association has given publicity to the canard. They should be made to contradict this statement in their next issue. Thanking you for exposing this matter.

I am, Dear Madam, yours sincerely,
"A NIGHTINGALE NURSE."

DEAR MADAM,—Of course, all the time the rows were going on in the R.B.N.A. we old members were well aware who was dangling the "Middlesex Marionettes," and we knew that sooner or later the "Ass" would be called upon for a *quid pro quo*. The present clique, having betrayed the professional interests of the nurse members, Sir Henry Burdett arrives upon the scene, and his "faithful henchman" opens the boom! But how cruel of Miss Leigh to give her patron away by publishing his "verbosity" in the *Nurses' Journal*. That the policy and editing of the trained nurses journal is in the hands of an untrained woman must be her excuse. Presumably Miss Leigh is totally ignorant of the history and traditions of the nursing profession. Sir Henry's statement that he "initiated" modern nurse training in no way appeared absurd and untrue in her opinion, and that it reflects upon the memories of Elizabeth Fry, Frederika Fliedner, Agnes Jones, and is an outrage to Miss Florence Nightingale—probably never occurred to her—or her medical patrons. No doubt the R. B. N. A. audience found Sir Henry Burdett's flights of imagination no more incredible than Mr. Fardon's statement that

Sir Henry is a friend of nurses. That he owes them a deep debt of gratitude as a means of self advertisement and social advancement is no doubt true, but that he has repaid his debt by years of bitter opposition to their professional organization is also a fact. But all is fair in modern politics, even we presume posing, during the life of Miss Nightingale, as the founder of the school of nurse training at St. Thomas Hospital. If ridicule can kill egregious egotism, then the "nursing prodigy" will have served a good end—it has caused unbounded mirth and satisfaction throughout the nursing world.

Yours truly,
"TWENTY YEARS A NURSE."

TESTIMONIALS.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I notice in the RECORD from time to time that you make deprecatory remarks as to the medical staffs of hospitals giving flourishing testimonials to uncertificated probationers who have left their training school before completing their training, and so helping them to obtain posts which should be filled only by fully-trained and certificated nurses. The undesirability of such a procedure is recognised by all to whom it is pointed out, and some committees to my knowledge make a rule prohibiting their staff from giving testimonials to any but certificated nurses. But what about testimonials given by Ward Sisters? Is this practice to be permitted? It may be natural for a nurse who has worked in a ward for some months to ask the Sister of the ward to speak in her favour. The Sister may consider it quite legitimate to do so. But it seems to me subversive of good discipline. Surely the Matron should be recognised, as the head of the nursing staff, as the person authorised to give references to all members of it, and it should be clearly understood that testimonials from subordinate officers are out of order. If this is not insisted upon it appears to me that a very wide door is opened for abuse.

I should be glad to know your opinion on the subject, as it is necessarily one of much weight in the nursing world.

I am, dear Madam, yours faithfully,
CERTIFICATED.

A POINT FOR CONSIDERATION.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was much struck by the remarks of Mrs. Robb, published in your last issue with regard to the responsibility of trained nurses towards the insane. "We cannot," she says, "fairly criticize the methods of those who are endeavouring to meet their needs, unless we have something better to offer. We also have a responsibility in guarding the standard of the graduate nurse." It seems to me that Mrs. Robb has most admirably voiced the position of the trained nurse to the various specialties. I have so often felt this with regard to midwifery education. We hold, and rightly, that a three months training in midwifery only, is totally inadequate, but what are we doing to try to get it included in the curriculum of general education? If one speaks to the majority of even well trained nurses they will tell one that they see no reason to include midwifery in a nurse's education—it is a special branch. But if we say so, if we make no effort to make it easy for nurses to obtain this training, how can we blame those who, mistakenly we

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)