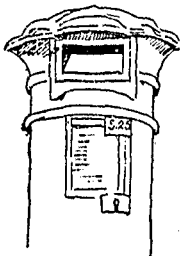


Letters to the Editor.

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 NURSES CO-OPERATION.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM.—The Co-operation nurses owe you thanks for placing before them the true condition of affairs. The truth is that ever since we refused to saddle ourselves with Sir Henry Burdett's "wild cat" scheme of a "little home at Clapham," two miles from a station, an office in the West End, and a Club in the Strand, which would have spelt bankruptcy in a very short time, he has been waiting for the balance sheet of our Howard de Walden Home to "go for" us. Instead of proving us in a bad way you have shown how solvent the Nurses' Co-operation is in reality. One gets tired to death with this everlasting interference from "nursing popes." I wish to protest against the statement made in Sir Henry Burdett's paper that he and his friends "founded the Nurses' Co-operation." They did no such thing. The Co-operation was "founded" with money advanced by four public spirited nurses, and Sir Henry neither suggested the scheme nor advanced one penny to start it. He will be claiming next that he "founded" the R.B.N.A. which he attacked most venomously for years, until he got the Nurses' Society under his control, through its present staff and dictators. Nursing and nurses are a fine commercial asset to the professional philanthropist, and it is to be hoped the nurses of the Co-operation will stand by the Committee which has made their society such a success. Any little differences of management can easily be arranged, privately, without all this wire pulling and scandal.

Yours truly,

NURSING POLITICS.

THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Miss Gardner's report of the discussion on Nursing at Birmingham by the Women's Liberal Federation is full of suggestion, and most valuable. I quite agree with you that the mere fact of this great body of active and intelligent women turning their attention to nursing is a distinct gain, and it is much to be regretted that the matrons invited to speak at the Conference were unable to do so, not that their inability is surprising, as all the professional nursing work is done by the few, and there does come a time when the "last straw" makes itself felt.

That nurses' hours on duty should be regulated somehow, I think right, as everything now depends upon irresponsible committees of men, who know very

little of the actual strain of a nurse's work, and who certainly do not realise that the combination of mental and physical work is much more exhausting than physical labour alone. No real reform will be effected until committees grasp the fact that nursing is skilled work, founded on a definite scientific basis, while it entails much study. This study could take place largely before a woman enters a hospital, leaving her free to do her clinical work in the wards with much less worry than can be done when she has to learn the a, b, c of practice and theory at one and the same time. Eight hours work in the wards can only be obtained by relays of nurses. Then, how about the Matron and the Sisters? The latter officers have now much more brain strain than in the past, because they are everlastingly teaching new and ignorant probationers. What would happen to the poor patients if there was a "general post" of sisters as well as nurses I don't know. All these officers work seven days a week. Of course, in the larger training schools hours have been greatly curtailed, but the increased expenditure has been enormous.

Yours,

MATRON OF A POOR HOSPITAL.

SOMETHING AND SOMEBODY.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—How I long to be going to the Nurses' Congress at Buffalo. I once paid a visit to the States, and have never lost the impression made upon me by what you term "the spacious Republic." It was so strange to feel *something*, to say nothing of *somebody*. The normal condition of the poor woman worker in this country is to be *nothing* and *nobody*. England is to the rich. The very way a flunkey turns up his nose at you as you enter our "lordly pleasure houses" is enough to make one sink into one's shoes. In America this miserable class distinction does not exist. Wealth counts for much certainly, but not for much, in the leading cities, without morals and culture. "Insolent fine ladies" would not be tolerated as they are here. Sometimes one almost believes that shabby clothes and an empty stomach do metamorphosize human beings—one gets to feel so cheap. I have heard some doctors say this great International Congress of Nurses should have been held in England, that the Americans should have come to us—not Britishers go to them. Had it been, is it presumable that a "mere nurse," even were she a Matron with a quarter of a century's experience, would have been permitted to preside and take the chair? Hardly, so long as there are so many notorious titled busy-bodies "sopping up" every bit of credit for the trained nurses' work as we have in this country. It will be a relief at Buffalo to find the Nurses' Congress managed by nurses, nurses presiding, and something said worth listening to, instead of all this sickening twaddle and patronage and small talk from which we suffer, "as working women," at home. What a pity our work is not as uninteresting to the sentimental as type-writing and clerking, or other starving occupations; we might then hope to be let alone to live and die in the obscurity which becomes a disfranchised bread-winner.

Yours faithfully,

"A DISFRANCHISED BREAD-WINNER."

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