



## 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.*

### OBSOLETE RULES FOR NAVAL NURSES.

*To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."*

DEAR MADAM,—The regulations just promulgated for Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service are indeed a bitter disappointment to those who hoped or reform, as the system of nursing in the Navy is infinitely more obsolete than that until recently in vogue in the Army.

1. The new regulations make no provision for a Head of the Naval Nursing Service, and, in consequence, where there is no Head Nursing Authority there can be no professional discipline. Until there is a Nursing Department at the Admiralty there can be no hope of efficient nursing in the Navy.

2. And why is sectarianism introduced into this Service, where the men are of all religions? Regulation 5 of Section 4 actually states that the Nursing Sisters "are not to be absent from prayers except with the sanction of the Head Sister." What prayers? Surely women fitted to be Nursing Sisters in the Naval Service should be allowed religious freedom.

3. "Their Lordships" of the Admiralty still fuss about the maid servants' wages and washing. What can be more ridiculous than the following statement under Section 5, in which it is written: "Their wages (servants) at home will be on the scale authorised by their Lordships, and they will be allowed 1s. 6d. a day in lieu of provisions, and 1s. a week for the washing of their personal linen." No woman can keep herself clean upon such an amount, as their "Lordships" might realise if their "Ladyships" permitted them to play "Betty Maria" at home. Such a sum would just provide clean collars weekly for one "Lordship," and leave nothing for cuffs!

4. Under the duties of Head Sister I regret to find the same bad system perpetuated of expecting a Head Sister to exercise general control and supervision over all the wards, whilst herself engaged in active nursing work in charge of a ward. Efficiency under such a system is impossible—a woman should be either engaged as supervisor or active nurse. She cannot perform the duties of both. Again, the Head Sisters are expected to make bricks without straw—or, rather, to maintain discipline without authority, for under Section 10 it is distinctly laid down that the medical officer is practically the Matron. "The Medical Officer will determine, as he may judge fit, according to circumstances, the hours at which the Nursing Sisters are to attend (that is, be on duty) and are to be relieved."

No. 8 regulation of this section constitutes the "Ward Master" the supreme authority in the ward—the Sisters are mere figure-heads—as these latter are told that "they are to represent without delay any neglect of duty or impropriety of

conduct on the part of any of the sick, both staff or patients, to the Ward Master, who is responsible for the maintenance of discipline in the wards, as well as for the cleanliness of the wards, passages, staircases, furniture, &c."

Why waste public money in keeping a staff of Sisters at all? They should have been made responsible for the efficient nursing of the sick in the wards, or been swept away—their position as defined is a farce.

Regulation 11 is a gratuitous insult to the Sisters: "No member of the staff is at any time to accept a present from a patient or his friends, and any letters received by the Nursing Sisters from the patients are to be shown to the Head Sister."

Imagine the class of woman suitable for what should be the honourable position of Sister in the Royal Naval Nursing Service, "holding an appointment" signed by Her Majesty the Queen, taking tips from "Jack" and carrying on an undesirable correspondence with him! What can Lord Selborne have been doing to permit such a regulation to stand? These are only a few of the blazing indiscretions interpolated in the new rules for Naval Sisters.

Yours truly,

A FRIEND OF JACK TAR.

### THE VALUE OF WOMEN'S WORK.

*To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."*

DEAR MADAM,—I think the nursing profession is indebted to you for your criticism of the value placed by a Government Department upon the work of experienced women. Probably there is no woman in the country who has a more responsible and arduous position than the Matron-in-Chief of the Military Nursing Service, yet she only receives £250 a year—a salary which, as you point out, compares unfavourably with that of the Matrons of our civil hospitals. Under-Secretaries at the War Office have salaries varying from £1,000 to £2,000, and the Chaplain-General also receives the former salary. Why not the Matron-in-Chief? Presumably because women are supposed to have few wants and to live laborious days. Is a woman ever expected to require a larger salary than one which will just keep body and soul together? That is to say, the virtuous woman whose price is "far above rubies." The financial situation is managed better by *les autres*.

Yours faithfully,

A MERE WOMAN.

### CO-OPERATIVE TRAINING.

*To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."*

DEAR MADAM,—I am very glad to see that you are taking up the question of co-operative training for nurses in the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING. We nurses are apt to find when we leave our training-schools—even the best of them—that our knowledge leaves much to be desired. A glimmer of this truth came to me when, as a certificated nurse, I was invited to fill up the form issued by the Matrons' Council to applicants for its Directory. "Do you hold the Certificate of your Training-School?" it asked, and I answered cheerfully, "Yes." But there were other questions to come. "Do you hold a Midwifery Certificate?" "Do you hold a Monthly Nursing Certificate?" "Do you hold a Massage Certificate?" "Do you hold the Certificate of the Medico-Psychological Society?" A negative was my reply to all these questions. Then I asked myself, "Ought I to

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