



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.

AMERICAN COURTESY.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I wish to express my thanks for the copy of your journal of August 15th just received, and my appreciation of the honour you have done me in printing my article on "The Education of Nurses."

Very truly yours,

FRANCIS P. DENNY.

173, Walnut Street, Brookline, U.S.A.
August 28th, 1903.

NURSES AND THRIFT.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I should be pleased when again in London to meet "M.R.B.N.A." and "Independence," and any other nurse who has *bond-fide* complaints which she believes in enough to have them thoroughly gone into by the only people qualified—*i.e.*, those who have kept the books and done the business of the Fund. It is obvious that no one can possibly judge between the parties who has not access, officially or by courtesy, to the records kept by both.

But it is no use simply to come together and hear monotonous, unverified assertions, made, often at second hand, by unbusinesslike and inaccurate persons, who, after all, have not the courage of their opinions, but retreat directly there is any question of real investigation, which would, of course, involve the revealing of their own identity.

Sir Henry Burdett's opinion is not here to the point either. This is no question of opinions, but of facts to be mathematically proved or disproved.

The only thing of any real help, and the only straight and possible course, is for those who have suffered injustice (or think they have) at the hands of the Fund's administrators to state their grievances precisely to some trustworthy person who will carry the matter through, and to let the Fund be communicated with and stand or fall by its answer.

They will have all the other policy-holders at their backs if they are thus open and honest, and we shall respect their integrity even if we are ultimately compelled to own them mistaken.

Or let even one or two act in this manner, publishing the truth, as your last correspondent puts it, in this journal. You, Madam, as Editor, expressly say that you do not hold yourself responsible, and, in any case, they can, I imagine, say nothing much worse than "Independence" did in her anonymous stab from behind printed in your issue of July 18th.

A meeting, such as "M.R.B.N.A." suggests should be held at her house, might clear the ground a little, if she could persuade "Independence" to drop her veil and appear primed with her particulars.

But it cannot be too strongly or too often insisted upon that mere accusations, made privately, even at a so-called Council of Nurses, are worse than useless, because absolutely unconvincing, besides being crooked dealing.

Unless such charges are to be doggedly carried to their fair and logical conclusion, it is worth no sensible woman's while to so much as listen to them.

I remain, dear Madam,

Yours truly,

M. D. BRINTON.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I do not see that "M.R.B.N.A." has improved matters by her letter, nor is it a subject for amusement to bring a serious charge against an investment fund and then refuse to prove it.

Perhaps your correspondent will kindly tell us (if the founder of the Fund dare not) why she was expelled; she need not mind if it was for no reason discreditable to herself. Let her publish the whole facts; if she cannot do this, why allude to it?

I would be the last to wish to cause the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING or its Editor any unpleasantness in return for their courtesy in allowing this discussion, but surely they are protected by the notice at the head of their correspondence page; and truth is not libel if it can be proved, so if "Independence" and "M.R.B.N.A." will prove their case we shall consider them public benefactors.

I am afraid a Council of Nurses would not do much good; it would be very difficult for private nurses to attend, especially those in the country, and, in justice to all sides, a representative from the Pension Fund and also a reporter should be present.

Since the discussion began I have asked more than one ex-policy-holder if she has received back all she has paid into the Fund; in each case the reply has been "Yes, certainly." I have also written to an official of the Fund. He replies: "The statement that a nurse received back less than she has paid in in pension premiums is a flagrant inaccuracy, which would not have been made by anyone who really had been in the Fund."

I am hoping we shall hear again from Miss Brinton or Sir H. Burdett, and after that, if "Independence" and "M.R.B.N.A." do not prove their statements, they can only be received for what they are worth—the contempt of all right-minded people; and I hope the young nurses among your readers will not be led away by them, but inquire for themselves, and, after they have read the names at the beginning of the prospectus, ask themselves if these well-known men of honour would lend themselves to what must be (if "Independence" and "M.R.B.N.A." are true) a fraud.

POLICY HOLDER.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The point to which I drew attention was Miss Wilson's statement that there was "only one" founder of the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses, and I said that it appeared to me "somewhat ungracious to the four gentlemen who put down £5,000 apiece to start the Fund to deny them any share in the matter." I cannot find anything in Miss Wilson's letter, which appeared in your last issue, to make me alter this opinion. Surely,

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