



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 CITY FINANCIERS' SCHEME.

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

MADAM,—We had very nearly got over our shock of surprise and indignation at a few laymen wishing to arrange for a higher education of nurses and to control our work without the slightest necessity, when a fresh surprise has come to us on finding that not only Miss C. J. Wood upholds them in their extraordinary scheme, but makes the statement that "there is no further need to consult nurses." Why is there no further need to consult nurses? There are many, I grant, who have shown selfishness and apathy, but are there not many others who have worked, striven, and fought bravely for their profession, its development, its advance and progress? There are many things to be remedied yet, much chaos to be reduced into order, but we must not overlook the laws of evolution; we cannot force and break down laws; things must evolve, and we can only advance and cope with difficulties as they arise. But when we look back, what reason have we to be discouraged? Has the nursing profession not risen and developed to the astonishment and admiration of the world? And who has done it all but the nurses themselves? Miss Wood forgets that those who were mere pros in her day are now some of the leaders of the profession. We cannot expect the bulk of nurses to steer and fight—they do the nursing; but surely there is a sufficiently large number of cultured women in the profession who are trying to cope with the complex difficulties of the present condition of things to make it quite unjustifiable for laymen, who are quite ignorant of our needs, to try and control our affairs. Miss Wood also makes the same sad mistake that some Matrons and some parents do in treating their nurses or their children as clay in the potter's hand. They go on blinding themselves to the fact that their pros. have turned into splendid women and are leaders in the profession, as mothers do that their daughters are mothers and their sons are men of mark.

As one who has had the training and supervision of nurses my principle has been to treat them as *women* and not as children and nonentities, and I can safely say that I have never lost by it. My nurses have taken wings and flown out into the world and done their Alma Mater credit; they have developed into self-reliant thinking women. Some of them now hold higher positions than I do, but our relations have remained most confidential.

So that, far from agreeing with Miss Wood, I strongly protest against nurses' affairs being settled for them without their knowledge and consent. We must not forget that they are women, many of them younger than ourselves it is true, but it is they who are to carry on the work and not we, and we ought to

explain things to them, point out the dangers and good points of certain movements and let them judge for themselves what path and what policy they choose to follow, strive for and develop.

Granted that a higher education for nurses is necessary and advantageous, it is those who know what nursing is who should define its curriculum, and not City men, who are terribly ignorant of the whole question.

As Matrons and as nurses we protest against being deprived of our right to think and act for ourselves.

Thanking you for your courtesy in granting space in your paper for the discussion of this important matter.

I remain, dear Madam,

Yours truly,

AN INDIGNANT MATRON.

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

DEAR MADAM,—As a mere outsider I cannot help remarking that so far none of your correspondents have gone to the root of the matter, and traced the connection between the Royal Pension Fund for Nurses and the new movement for Voluntary Registration under the auspices of the seven millionaires.

There is no bigger farce bearing the mystic title "Royal" than this Pension Fund for Nurses. Its parade days and medal days and all the rest of the tinsel serve to conceal the fact that an interested group are striving to get the nursing profession into their grasp by seizing the control of its savings. Has it ever occurred to the leaders of the profession—shall we say, for instance, the ladies who signed the letter of March 4th to the daily Press—that the Pension Fund is self-sustaining from the nurses' contributions alone? That no nurse who joins it is under any obligation whatever to the promoters, and that out of total funds amounting on December 31st, 1903, to £841,193, the Donation Bonus Fund only reached £59,582, whilst the nurses' contributions reached £713,661.

Nurses should begin at the beginning and shake themselves clear of this institution in favour of one or the other of the old-established insurance societies, most of which would give them greater value for the same money.

If any nurses have any doubts on this score, let them examine the results of the first Thousand Nurses' Fund which are now coming in. Perhaps some of the ladies who are now annuitants under this scheme can tell us how much they have paid and what benefits they are now receiving, so that comparisons may be made with the results of insurance offices doing the same class of business. The difference would be surprising.—I am, yours, &c.,

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J. FORBES SOMERVILLE.

East Dulwich, S.E.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I am glad to see that the nurses of the United Kingdom are strongly protesting against the dangerous encroachments upon their professional liberties embodied in the Memorandum of Association of certain financiers who are applying for incorporation in a Society to promote the higher education and training of nurses. What in the world do City men know about the training and education of nurses?

It may be argued that these men are rich, and can

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