



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.

RURAL DISTRICT NURSING.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I hope "Excelsior's" letter may come under the notice of the Select Committee on Nursing, the serious cases she mentions in the country parish she nurses occur all over the country. Why, because the people are poor, are they to be at the mercy of ignorant and inefficient nurses? Is it charity for fine ladies and county magnates who constitute themselves into committees for nursing their poor neighbours, to provide an ignorant nurse they would not think of employing themselves if seriously ill? Seems more like vanity than charity in my opinion. The reply that the salary and upkeep of a Jubilee nurse cannot be afforded in rural districts is begging the question—the truth is, the majority of these country gentry think the working woman with a smattering is quite good enough for the poor, a large majority are still under the impression that "the people" are constituted by Providence of quite other material than themselves. Go and live in a "ducal" or country village if you want to realise the innate feudalism which still rules rural England.

I should like to see Registration in force, because these poor country people would then be able to insist upon having a trained nurse in sickness instead of a makeshift.

Yours truly,
LATE DISTRICT NURSE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I thoroughly agree with the attitude maintained by your correspondent "Excelsior," that only one kind of nurse should be offered to the public whether rich or poor, *i.e.*, the trained nurse. The trouble is that at present, owing to the lack of standard, no one can say with authority what a trained nurse is. It is generally accepted by training-school authorities, that is to say, by those who are most competent to judge, that three years' systematic training in a hospital offering varied experience is necessary. Many lay committees apparently consider three months midwifery, which it must be remembered is neither nursing nor the care of sick people, with a three months' insight into general work in the homes of the poor, not in the wards of a hospital at all, constitutes an adequate training.

Again the Church Army, persistently advertises that it gives "free training" in nursing. Lady Helen Munro Ferguson told the Select Committee on Nursing that this Society trains for three months, and that the course includes "instruction in the knowledge of the Bible and Prayer-Book, visiting, singing at meetings, and nursing!"

Who, then, is to decide what a trained nurse is? First let us have the standard defined, and then if rural district committees can afford to maintain a trained nurse, well and good. If not, let them honestly say, "we cannot afford a trained nurse, but we will do the best we can"; then if they employed a useful woman, nobody would be under a misapprehension. It is the fact that an imperfectly-trained woman is supplied with the status of the trained, which is so mischievous.

Yours faithfully,
JUSTITIA.

THE INTELLIGENT FEW.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I can quite corroborate what "One of the Few" writes about the frivolous irresponsibility of the average nurse. I stayed at a Nurses' Hostel in London during the crisis in our affairs in relation to the "Guy's" scheme. It is hardly credible that the majority of about thirty nurses in the Home knew nothing about it. The Superintendent objected to the inmates subscribing for the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, the only paper which had the courage to make a stand against what Sir Henry Burdett calls the "Rothschild platform"—in other words, the Burdett ticket, and as Burdett's organ withheld information on the subject, his readers were purposely kept in the dark. We may blame the Matrons of the large hospitals and Superintendents of commercial Nurses' Homes for siding against the nurses' interests, but could they succeed if the nurses themselves showed the slightest intelligence? They could not. Play acting, clothes, and penny novelettes, amusement, in fact—that is the usual routine. I don't believe one nurse in a hundred cares twopence for anything but a good time, and, sad to say, this is not altogether the result of a lack of good education, as the better-class nurse is even more selfish than those of the working class.

Yours sincerely,
AN OBSERVER.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I am surprised at the experience of "One of the Few" as detailed in your issue last week. My own is the exact contrary. All the members of this staff but one are members of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and that one has every intention of joining it. Several have attended some of the sittings of the Select Committee on Nursing, and their subsequent descriptions of the proceedings to their less fortunate colleagues—for few private nurses are able to attend these Committee meetings—were both intelligent and amusing. I wonder if the Superintendent of the staff of nurses referred to by your correspondent takes an interest in the Registration question herself? I can hardly think so. I find that every nurse with whom I come in contact, almost without exception, is strongly desirous for State Registration, though she may not be able to give the reasons for the faith that is in her. If, however, one explains the importance of an intelligent grip of the question, not *de haut en bas*, but as a nurse working with her fellow nurses for this reform for the common good, I find nurses respond in the most remarkable way. There are few nurses on this staff whom I should be afraid to subject to an adverse cate-

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