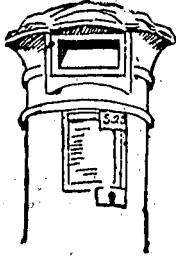


Letters to the Editor.

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 ARMY NURSING SERVICE RESERVE.
To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

MADAM,—I desire as the original proposer of the Army Nursing Service Reserve, to point out that this important Corps of Nurses is entirely excluded from mention in the official Army Lists.

2. In my opinion this is quite irregular, and needs to be at once remedied by entering the names of these ladies immediately after the Regular Nursing Service in the official Army List. They constitute the Reserve Battalion of the Regular Sisters.

3. I desire further to say that it is essential to divide this Reserve Corps into county sections so that they may know the volunteer and reserve officers of their counties and so visit the camps of the volunteers; and also that the Nursing Sisters may teach the R.A.M.C. volunteers nursing routine in their civil hospitals. The county is the true unit of organisation in all military bodies.

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE EVATT,

Surgeon-General (late A.M.S.).

Junior U.S. Club, London.

A DIRECTORY FOR NURSES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I read your Editorial on this subject with interest; for, ever since the question has been suggested, and ever since Lord Crewe received the deputation on this subject I have been threshing out the matter with State Registrationists and Anti-State Registrationists, laymen and doctors. This is an extract from the letter of one doctor:—

"I am very much interested in Nursing Registration, and before was a keen advocate for it. I must confess, however, that this new idea of an official Directory if properly carried out would, it seems to me, obtain for nurses everything that can really be desired, and that if the mass of nurses themselves could be got really to study the subject, hitherto not the case (Alas! Yes, when will nurses awake to their own interests!—E. R. W.) they would prefer it to anything else. There is, too, a certain danger of nurses being legalised out of their proper position in a way which would be decidedly detrimental to their interests, since it would create a spirit of opposition to them, both amongst the public and medical men, such as at present barely exists. It is a real danger, and only

to be overlooked if it proves impossible to obtain for nurses a proper position without running it."

My answer to him was the following:—

"I thank you for your letter and value it as coming from an old friend and because I know it contains no 'party' feeling in it, but I cannot agree with your views.

"An Official Directory for Nurses is unquestionably an excellent thing, and so is a dictionary, but the one must be based on State Registration and a Central Governing Board as the other on a Grammar.

"Up to the present moment there exist hospitals which give one, two, three, and four-year certificates, each with varying standards, each being a law unto itself.

"What good is a Directory under the circumstances, what redress have nurses against their training schools, which have taken their money from them and sapped their strength from them, when they find too late the mistake they made in their choice?

"As to your second argument with regard to the danger of nurses being legalised out of their proper position, let me remind you, that never have midwives been so entirely under professional and legal control as since the Midwives' Bill has come in. And thus it will be with nurses, their boundary line and their limitations will come under professional and legal control, such as it is impossible under present conditions to define.

"Training Schools too should be under the control of a Central Board on exactly the same lines as that of the Central Midwives' Board, and it will be as easy to control a big profession as it is a small one. Organisation and order are at the root of success. They have been the success of Napoleon, Togo, and Kitchener, nay shall we not add General Booth, Whiteley and others. Are we matrons and nurses to go on muddling blindly at the mercy of unprogressive men and women. You have such an admiration for my father, let me remind you of his constant refrain: 'Progress! Progress!! Evolution! Evolution!!' We cannot go against the current indefinitely, but even in going with it, we must be careful not to get stuck in a mud bank, be stopped by the trunk of a fallen tree, or break our heads against a rock.

"Excelsior is our motto, and we shall not be content until we get State registration and a central governing board, to be 'crowned' by an 'official Directory.'"

Yours,

EDLA R. WORTABET.

[Miss Wortabet justly points out that without registration by the State, based on a minimum standard of education and knowledge defined by a central expert authority, no Directory can touch the present disorganisation in nursing affairs. In connection with the Central Midwives' Board it must be remembered that as at present constituted only one certified midwife has a seat upon it, and that as a nominated member. On any Central Nursing Board established "the nursing profession," in the words of the British Medical Association, "should be adequately and directly represented."—Ed.]

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