

## NURSING ECHOES.

\* \* \* Communications (duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith) are especially invited for these columns.

THE correspondence which has been going on in these columns on the knotty subject of Diets for Nurses, and Domestic Management of Hospitals generally, seems to have excited a good deal of public and professional interest on the subject. A kind correspondent sends me, anonymously, a cutting from some paper—I imagine part of a letter. I wish she would be kind enough to tell me where it was taken from, and to send me any other correspondence or annotations which come under her notice on the same matter, and to let me have her name, that I may thank her by letter.

\* \* \*

It is quite wonderful, Mr. Editor says, how many anonymous letters he gets, and he asks me to say here that it is an invariable rule to take no notice of any letter, unless it contains the writer's card, or true name and address. English journalistic ideas are very strict upon this point. The Editor, it is held, must, in duty bound, have the guarantee of the writer's name, that any information given, is reliable. But, on the other hand, in a somewhat long experience, I only remember one case in which an Editor betrayed a correspondent's name, when it was asked to be withheld. The sadly dishonourable exception, however, occurred in the pages of a contemporary, who has accustomed us to find it ignorant or careless of the high traditions and customs of the Fourth Estate in the Realm.

\* \* \*

AND in this instance it so happened, unfortunately for its credit, that it could hardly have made a graver mistake. Miss Wood—perhaps one of the best known and most respected members of the Nursing Profession—wrote its Editor a letter upon one of the points connected with the Pension Fund for Nurses, which was eminently calculated to arouse indignation in any just and honourable mind. For it was actually announced, my readers may remember, that the fund proposed to give its benefits to male officials of Hospitals at one-sixth less of the amount it intended to charge Nurses. Miss Wood's letter pointed this out, and she signed it with a *nom de plume*, of course sending her own name or card with it. With a gentlewoman's ideas of honour, I suppose she thought it more fair to write to the Editor of our contemporary, who week by week advocated the advantages of the Pension Fund; and apparently did not know the unenviable character it had gained in the journalistic world. I need not remind my readers that

Miss Wood is one of the Hon. Secretaries of the British Nurses' Association, and how our contemporary never loses a chance of showing its hatred and fear of that great body of Nurses. Consequently the opportunity was eagerly seized, and all journalistic honour and good faith being cast aside, our contemporary published the name and office of the writer of the unsigned letter, as if it were an official expression of opinion from the Association. The glaring untruth and malice of this act, however, has of course recoiled upon its own head, and I pity any one who trusts to our contemporary's views of honour and truthfulness in future.

\* \* \*

HOWEVER, to return to our quotation on the great question of Hospital Diet, which is as follows:—“Home associations are dear to all. When a man is ill he feels more acutely than at any other time the deprivation of small comforts he has enjoyed all his life. In many Hospitals there is miserable meanness, also muddling, irritating to the patients. As an example, I will state that, though formerly the working classes used moist sugar in their tea, now they generally use lump, and some Hospitals annoy their patients by giving them moist sugar: as if loaf sugar was so much dearer. When tea was an expensive article, and not as commonly used as now, patients had to supply their own tea. Now that tea is cheap this practice is still continued, and the tea is made, at least in one Hospital, in this way: the tea furnished by each patient in a Ward is mixed together in one tea-pot; no one knowing of what quality the tea supplied by each person is. There are Hospitals at which the tea, sugar, and milk are all mixed together and sent to the Ward in large vessels; no thought being given to the fact that tastes vary much in the matter of sugar and milk with tea. The diet at some Hospitals is much superior to that at others. This is not right.”

\* \* \*

“JACOBI, in his book on Hospitals for the Insane, remarks that it is of vital importance that the food supplied to patients should be pure and of good quality ‘to ensure its being easily digested.’ As a security that this should be the case, he suggests that all provisions should as far as possible be provided by the Hospitals themselves. This does not appear to be the practice in English Hospitals, where even the bread is procured from a contractor, not made, as it should be, on the premises. Guy's appears to be the only London Hospital using home-made bread. The same was the practice at old St. Thomas's Hospital; but at the new Hospital there are no means of baking bread. About meat and the mode of cooking it in Hospitals something should be said. Much harm may

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)