



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.

NURSING IN THE COLONIES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—In your issue of 16th June, I find such a sweeping condemnation of the state of Nursing and Nurses in Sydney, and inferentially in the Australasian Colonies generally, that I crave space in your columns, very reluctantly, to say a few words upon this subject which interests me very much, but of the technicalities of which, I at once acknowledge, I know very little. I am interested in the following way:—Three or four years ago, in the course of my travels, I found myself, by courtesy of its members, at one of the admirable Melbourne Clubs, to the hospitality of which travellers owe so much, when one of my companions was struck down by illness. For a time he battled against his complaint, and was assiduously attended upon by the "boots" of the establishment, but as this attendance was manifestly insufficient, and as he became dangerously ill, he was removed to a private hospital, presided over by a Miss M. D. Farquharson, who was assisted by a staff of trained Nurses. It was my privilege to attend that Hospital, with slight intermission, for about three weeks, at various hours of the day, and sometimes late into the night, as suited my convenience, whilst a prolonged battle was proceeding, in the person of my friend, between life and death, his danger being aggravated by a series of operations of a most delicate character. I had to leave Melbourne whilst the crisis was pending, and as the medical attendant gave me no hope of my friend's recovery, I took leave of him, as I thought, for the last time, and undertook to write to his friends in England, to acquaint them as to his position. I am happy to say that through the skill of the medical man, the devotion and unremitting care of the Matron and the Nurses, and, above all, the blessing of God, my friend was subsequently restored to comparative health and strength. I came personally into contact with five or more of these Nurses, all colonially trained, in addition to Miss Farquharson, who, by the way, is an English trained Nurse, and, I am proud to say, that I respect them, and highly value them for the work I saw them perform, and that I count them now amongst my friends. Now this grain of fact is worth a bushel of such statements as "The whole system is rotten," and "The latter (the 'Society woman') is the typical Nurse of the Colonies," which I do not hesitate to say are aspersions upon the system of Nursing in the Colonies, and upon the characters of the ladies whose aims are as pure and noble, and whose work is as exemplary, as those of any Nurses in the world. I happen also to be on terms of friendship with Miss Macartney, eldest daughter of the Very Reverend the Dean of Melbourne, who manages one, if not the most important, of the private Hospitals in Melbourne, and I can testify that her whole life is a devotion to her work. I have had the privilege of inspecting her Hospital and nursing staff, and know well that neither required any vindication or recommendation on my part. Further, I am acquainted with the Alfred Hospital in Sydney, and am sure, from personal inspection, that its wards are as good a Training School for Nurses as it is possible for a Colonial Hospital to provide; and I am sure that it is another aspersion of your

correspondent to say that medical men in the colonies "do not appreciate the fully trained women," and that they work them "night and day, after the fashion of some notorious London abdominal surgeons." The truth is that young Nurses, as well as young members of other employments and professions in this country, form high hopes and sanguine expectations, or, as your correspondent says, "bright dreams," of the advantages of colonial occupations to those, with home education and experience, who determine to try their fortunes elsewhere; and on arrival in the Colonies are disappointed to find that the rivalries of life are not less keen there than in their native land. Some breast themselves to their work in a good spirit, courageously overcome their difficulties, and, ultimately, succeed; but others, like your correspondent, who perhaps have little claim to superiority in their professions, or who are wholly incapable of maintaining their places in the competition of life, take a jaundiced view of their surroundings, ascribe their failure to the wilful withholding of appreciation of their qualities on the part of those whose duty it is to judge them, and write home such characteristic effusions as are the subject of this letter.—I remain, yours faithfully,

35, Belsize Avenue,
Hampstead, Sept. 7, 1894.

F. LARKWORTHY.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—My attention has been drawn to the remarks of "A Trained Nurse from Sydney," published by you on 16th June last, which are so far from complimentary to the Nursing profession in Sydney specially, and by implication to that of Australia generally, that I am constrained to write a few words as to my own experience in Melbourne, in vindication of the Nurses there. In September, 1889, I was taken to Dr. Fitzgerald's private Hospital at Lonsdale House, Melbourne, in a nearly dying condition from congestion of the lungs contracted during a sea voyage. The attention, and so far as I could judge, the capabilities of the Nurses with whom I came in contact—and they were several—was beyond all praise. The Nurse in whose particular charge I was placed had been trained at the Prince Alfred Hospital at Sydney, and I shall always feel a deep sense of gratitude to her. Hoping that you may find space for this letter, I am, Madam, yours truly,

Henmead Hall, Cuckfield,
7th Sept., 1894.

W. M. CAMPBELL
(Major-General).

SHOULD NURSES BE POLITICIANS?

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—"Political Charge Nurse" cannot have considered the subject of her letter from the patient's point of view, or she would have recognised that any exciting subject is unsuitable for discussion among the sick and suffering. To politics, this applies in a special degree, as almost every woman has either an opinion of her own, which she has thought out for herself, or cleaves tenaciously to the time-honoured views of her ancestors. My own opinion is, that Woman will get her suffrage without petitions from Hospital wards, all in good time, quite as soon as she is sufficiently educated to use her vote with discretion. Nurses are in the vanguard of progress, for are we not the first body of women incorporated under Royal Charter—a "right" we had no reason even to dream of, ten years ago. I do not think that a Nurse's political views would affect her professional success in any way, always provided they were neither unduly nor unreasonably obtruded on others.—I am, Madam, your obedient servant,

MARGERIE HOMERSHAM.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—There is an old saying, "Avoid politics and religion if you would have peace," but as you have admitted

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