



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.

SHOULD NURSES BE POLITICIANS?

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—In some Nursing Institutions there is a rule forbidding the Nurses interfering with the religious views of their patients, but the rule surely does not bar a Nurse from holding strong religious opinions, if she be so disposed. Why should not that rule be applied to politics? If Nurses must be politicians, let politics be their recreation, but, surely, to introduce petitions on any party question into a ward would be the beginning of endless disputations and discussions, tending to destroy the peace and calmness which ought to be surrounding the sick poor in our hospitals. I do not see that because a private Nurse is known to entertain political views it would be likely to injure her in her profession, provided she has the sense to keep her views to herself and not try to force them down her patients' or any one else's throats, regardless of their views. Let her have the courage to declare her convictions when appealed to, but to avoid all parade of those views and all party spirit. Be a Nurse first, then a politician if so inclined; but, personally, I think Nurses had better leave politics alone. We can and ought to be convinced about the right and wrong of any of the burning questions of the day without belonging to any party; and in hospitals, at least, a Nurse can do more good to and for her patients by quietly and firmly upholding the right, than by endless arguments on the merits and demerits of her party.

"A NON-POLITICAL NURSE."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Well may men laugh at women as politicians, when we read such remarks and childish questions asked as those of a "Political Charge Nurse," in your valuable paper of September 1st. She must (judging from her letter) have a very limited acquaintance with the women of the Nursing profession if she thinks it an unusual thing for Nurses to advocate the women's vote, and, with it, its accompanying reform of the laws that deal with the work and welfare of women and children. My life is spent amongst Nurses, and when speaking to them on these subjects that are agitating, to a greater or lesser degree, the politicians, both men and women of the civilized world, my experience has been that the majority—and not the minority (as a "Political Charge Nurse seems to imply)—are in favour of "Woman's Suffrage," and many are quite as advanced in their views as Miss Willard and her colleagues in America. The members of the Nursing profession who think at all on such subjects, think deeply, and feel keenly, the wrongs of their sisters, and are daily brought in contact with too much sorrow and misery, both mental and bodily (the result, in so many cases, of one-sided legislation), to care very much if those who work for, and are anxious to help on, "Women's Suffrage," are so-called "Frumps" and "Blue Stockings." In my humble opinion, such advocates for Women's Suffrage as a "Political Charge Nurse" are hardly likely to make many converts to the good cause if they use such arguments for a fair hearing as she does, namely, that she is young, somewhat good-looking, and has admirers. It is such per-

sonalities that cause our opponents to hold us up to ridicule. Beauty is indeed a great power, but would it not be in better taste to leave it to others to say we were the fortunate possessors of it? And to mention that we have admirers amongst the opposite sex as a reason why other women should believe in us, is no argument at all. As far as my experience serves me, most women have admirers—or say they have—and all womankind has beauty—some, certainly, more than others—but the goodness of the heart and nobleness of the mind found in some women (and it is found amongst many members of the Nursing profession) adds a beauty of its own that lasts longer than merely good features. I cannot commend a "Political Charge Nurse's" valuation of her own good points. What she lacks, in my humble opinion—and may I be forgiven for daring to say so—is a little common sense. Did she exercise what she may possess, she would not be in such doubt as to what she might or might not do, or what her patients would think of her if she spoke to them on such a topic as Women's Suffrage. People who are in earnest are, as a rule, careful how they broach their pet subject, so as to best win attention. And if a "Political Charge Nurse" bears this in mind, she will soon find that her patients will judge her fairly, and not sign for the "Women's Vote," feeling it is done under a spirit of coercion, but of co-operation.

A MEMBER OF THE "R.B.N.A."

THE DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Personally, I owe very much to the skill and devoted kindness of trained Nurses, and I should be most ungrateful to wound their susceptibilities without good cause. But Nurses, as much as other people, are lovers of truth and justice. They will themselves, therefore, protest against the extraordinary demand of one of their colleagues, that the NURSING RECORD should discuss only such questions as the directorate might make agreeable to a certain section of Anglicans. If Miss Susan T. Antrobus had had a practical acquaintance with the subject on which she writes, it would have been clear to her that hardly anything could be more appropriately considered in a publication like the NURSING RECORD than the question of marriage with a deceased wife's sister, which has no reason of existence except as it concerns the proper up-bringing, or nursing, of young children. In support of her hostility, your correspondent advances some amazing propositions—as, that the "Table of Affinity in our Prayer Book is the rule of the Universal Church." Then the two hundred millions of Roman Catholics are no part of the Church. All denominations in America are equally outside. The Orthodox believers, who look upon our Table of Affinity as a very poor affair, must also be excluded. This lady has much more of the same sort of statement; but, to be brief, I turn to her illustrations. She says: "Look at John the Baptist, he did not approve even of the marriage of Herod; and St. Paul denounced the marriage of the Corinthian with his stepmother"; and she in effect adds: "were not these instances of the sin of marrying within the Table of Affinity?" Are we, accordingly, to assume that Miss Antrobus, who wishes to undertake the management of your important medium of intelligence, does not know that Herod, in marrying his living brother's wife, violated the Mosaic and moral law in every particular; or that the Corinthian married the living father's wife, and thereby committed a criminal act which was held in abomination even by heathens? These illustrations have not the least relevance to the case of the deceased wife's sister; but just as every Parliamentary fledgling, coming straight from his large domestic experiences at the University, feels himself competent to discuss this question authoritatively in a maiden speech, so there are some members of the High Anglican Sisterhood, who think they

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