



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 DANGER OF UNPROFESSIONAL CONTROL.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—The "increasing interest and importance attaching to Nursing questions" is the very last argument Mr. Burdett should have brought forward in extenuation of his proposed "Official Directory." It is just this interest and importance which will efficiently protect both the public and the Nursing profession generally against so preposterous a suggestion as this Joint Company of Mr. Burdett, and "a few medical men and matrons" whose identity is veiled and lost in a comprehensive Co.

The alluring bait of "free registration"—as opposed to the legitimate fee of one guinea of the Royal British Nurses' Association—is probably based on the Director's knowledge of a common desire on the part of the public to get everything for nothing—"new lamps for old." But it is very unlikely that any Nurses of standing will invest their reputations in a concern whose only dividend must be the total loss of professional dignity, and for which no "cover" is offered; unless we count the pity, and perhaps contempt, with which the Nurses who lend themselves to such a scheme will be "covered" in the eyes of those of their sisters who hold in high estimation the status of their profession.

The wording of the prospectus is delightful. It begins, "I have decided to issue"—and then in a parenthesis and quite as an after-thought—"with the assistance of a small committee of medical men and matrons, a work which," &c.

The above sentence would suggest a nominal and limited capital of matrons, and an unlimited amount of assurance.

Mr. Burdett has appointed himself the official receiver of the names of those Nurses who wish to figure in his Directory, and he is obliging enough to give an assurance that there will be no "rigid conformity in curriculum" or a "definite period in training" to be exacted from the candidates. This will be delightful news to many in our ranks, who, after three months or less in a hospital, are pleased to wear the fancy dress of a Nurse and engage in private work, or who, as Lecturers on Hygiene, Nursing and Ambulance, attempt to conceal their ignorance of the first principles of the art they profess under the pseudonym of "Sister Ethel," &c.

These ladies will rejoice and make merry, for they will say, "if our names appear in Burdett's Official Directory, will not that make us official?" The generosity of the movement appears in the somewhat lavish promise that "no charge is made for the insertion of particulars," but the speculative turn of mind of the originator of the scheme comes out in the suggestion that one "may procure a copy," and that "all postal orders may be crossed London and County."

So that the Directory is a publishing investment with a dividend of 4s. 6d. declared on each Nurse who is unprofessional enough to desire an advertisement for herself in an unauthorised publication. The Directory, we are told, is to be "strictly official" and of a "neutral character." But later on, we hear that the "compilers reserve the right of excluding any name from the Directory;" therefore it is not neutral, and as to being "official," are we to yield to the pretension that the standard of a Nurse is to be settled by a stockbroker? There is one suggestion for Mr. Burdett's

guidance, and that is a hint that he should be careful not to include in this Directory the name of any Nurse without individual permission. There are a very large number of us who would object to our names appearing side by side with the "short term" Nurses, who will only be too anxious to avail themselves of such an opportunity as he offers them. The Directory, if published at all, will make a somewhat pitiable showing, minus the names of distinguished and honourable members of our profession who will not lend themselves to the estimation in which they desire Nurses should be held—being "farmed out" for the price of a volume of a work which must be utterly useless, because necessarily so incomplete.

I append in Stock Exchange form a draft of the kind of Report which might, I imagine, be issued from the headquarters of the Directory, giving the summary of a week's "transactions."

"Monday.—Scarcely anything doing. Short arrivals and slow trade.

"Tuesday.—A moderate business doing in burlesque Nurses with short training, anxious to get their names on to any Register which will further their plans for seeming what they are not.

"Wednesday.—There has been a little more inquiry on this market, but the trade remains in a very quiet condition."

"Thursday.—Trade showed a slight improvement, although supply was in excess of the demand. General trade irregular, and no reliable quotations can be given.

"Friday.—Members of the Royal British Nurses' Association active, consequently less demand.

"Saturday.—There was little business this morning, transactions being checked by the articles in the various newspapers. Sales nil. There was only a very poor cash demand."

ANNESLEY KENEALY,

Registered Nurse, Member Matrons' Council.

THE DUTIES OF ASSISTANT MATRONS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I have lately held the position of Assistant Matron in a large Convalescent Home where many of the patients needed active nursing, and where a numerous staff of trained Nurses were in attendance.

The Lady Superintendent deputed to me various duties. I was responsible for the cleanliness of the Institution outside the wards, and had to see that the maids and scrubbers performed their duties punctually; I also had charge of the domestic department, the linenry, and laundry, and measured out the weekly stores of food and cleaning materials. I spent much of my time in the linen room, where all articles needed for use were cut out and made, and gained much valuable experience in domestic management, which I find invaluable in my present post—Matron of a hospital of fifty beds, without an assistant. I am of opinion that no assistant Matron is required in a Convalescent Institution under 100 beds, as the Matron has little to do when so much of the practical work is deputed to a junior officer, and better discipline is maintained where she superintends the details of management personally.

Yours truly,

COUNTRY MATRON.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—In reply to a letter in your paper of today respecting the duties of an Assistant Matron in a large Convalescent Home, I shall be pleased to give my experiences.

The duties depend, as a rule, on the Matron. In an Institution such as the above, I do the housekeeping, have charge of and distribute stores of every description, supervise the work of the servants and am personally responsible for the ordering and serving of all meals for 150 people daily. In the absence of the Matron her duties devolve on me.

I am, dear Madam, yours faithfully,

ASSISTANT MATRON.

Reg. Nurse, M.R.B.N.A.

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