

"No Admittance."

A REPRESENTATIVE of the NURSING RECORD called on the Manager of the Langham Hotel a day or two ago with reference to the several complaints that Nurses in uniform are denied admission to the public rooms of that hotel.

Inviting her to a seat in the beautiful *salle à manger* of the hotel, where groups of visitors were taking tea and discussing the social events and fashions of the hour, the manager proceeded to explain the situation.

"It is quite true that we have a standing rule that no Nurses in uniform are permitted to sit down to meals. The waiters have orders to that effect, and it is a law without any exception."

"Can you suggest a reason why ladies belonging to such an honourable profession are placed under so unpleasant a restriction?"

"Please don't assume that I have made the rule, or that I have any feeling in the matter. The custom has arisen purely from the expressed wishes of our guests. The trouble began some three years since, when the influenza epidemic assumed such serious proportions. There was almost a panic in the hotel. The visitors had visions of small-pox, cholera, and other frightful creations of their own imaginations, and we were assailed at the office with questions."

"And it was then decided that uniforms should disqualify a Nurse from a natural inclination to eat her dinner?"

"The Committee thought it best to issue instructions that Nurses, either in the hotel or dining here as friends of our guests, should divest themselves of the somewhat depressing dress of their calling. You have no idea what commotion the uniform causes. People staying in the rooms next to that occupied by a Nurse, besiege us at the office for a change of apartments. And some are even afraid to lodge on the same corridor."

"Would a Sister of Charity come under the same rule?"

"I can hardly answer that question. You see a Sister would hardly be likely to want to dine here."

"Is there any restriction here, as in some of the American hotels, as to the presence of negroes or coloured people?"

"No, I think not," said the manager, laughing at the implied suggestion that Nurses and negroes were placed on the same social footing, "but we have had coloured Royalty here and no one objected."

"Of course, the majority of people would prefer to dine with bronzed Royalty rather than with white commoners, but I just asked for information."

"If I may give a hint I would like to suggest that the RECORD, instead of waging war against hotel managers, who really have very little voice in the matter, would try to create a healthy public feeling, so that a cap and apron in an hotel would not cause a mild kind of panic. I should be delighted to be one of the first to remove any disability on the part of a Nurse to appear in her professional dress."

"There is another difficulty. It is by no means uncommon for Private Institutions to exact from their Nurses as a point of honour, that they should never appear out of their uniform while nursing a private case."

"I quite agree, and it seems to me that the sooner that restriction is placed on a sliding footing the better, especially as regards hotel nursing, and I hope I may be permitted to say that some Nurses adopt an almost aggressive perfection of costume. It looks rather odd in a room full of conventionally garbed people, to see a Nurse with stiffly starched cap, large apron, jingling chatelaine and Red Cross pincushion, walk the length of the dining room. It naturally causes questions as to whom she is nursing and what is the matter."

"But what alternative is offered to Nurses? Some private Nurses, who always wear Hospital garb, have really no change of costume, and would therefore find a case in an hotel where the wearing of 'mufti' was an essential, somewhat embarrassing."

"Unfortunately we have no room but the stewards' room, where ladies' maids and couriers take their meals. This is awkward for lady Nurses. The alternative is to take their meals in their bed rooms, or to remove their caps, aprons and chatelaines. We only ask that. We don't wish them to dress for dinner, or in any way to make them uncomfortable, or add to their duties; but so long as the present public feeling lasts we must ask Nurses to remove that part of their dress which distinctively marks their calling, and leads to unpleasant rumours of illness."

"Well, I think the Nurses will be interested to hear your views, and I must agree with you that the hotel managers are not to blame. Hotels are run for profit, and to please the guests, and I can readily appreciate that you cannot afford to disregard the prejudices of your patrons."

"Please accept my thanks to the RECORD, for having given me the opportunity of explaining the situation, and for expressing the unpleasant necessity I am under, of enforcing our necessary restriction. Personally, I should be delighted to be in a position to remove the rule, and should be only too glad to see the lady Nurses freely welcome at our tables, in the dress which marks their profession."

Our representative was very courteously received, and feels pleased to be in a position to bring the other side of the story before the readers of the RECORD, as showing some justification of a rule which has led to much embarrassment and distress among many private Nurses. The whole thing rests with the public. So long as they possess such an exaggerated sense of self-preservation, so long will the Nurses have to suffer in their professional pride, by being taught to regard their honourable uniform as a kind of scare-bomb thrown into the midst of a community. It is really as irrational to jump to the conclusion, on seeing a Nurse in uniform, that infectious disease has broken out, as it would be to imagine, on seeing a soldier in his distinctive dress, that a battle was about to be fought, or bloodshed to follow, in some part of the hotel.

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