



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.

"ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—It may not be known to your readers generally that a Bill is to be introduced into Parliament next session in which all Poor Law officers are to submit to a reduction of from two to three per cent. in their salaries, to establish a fund for assisting in providing a superannuation allowance to all officers.

At present there is an Act, passed in 1864, which gives to Guardians the power to superannuate any officer who has faithfully discharged his duties, and this Act has been most liberally interpreted during the past thirty years by Boards of Guardians generally. The proposed Act looks very feasible and fair on the face of it, but when it is looked into carefully, it will be seen that it is not so, but that it will benefit a few at the expense of the majority; for instance, Nurses at present none too well paid will have to submit to this reduction to their salaries. My experience of one of the largest Metropolitan Infirmaries is, that very few indeed of the Nurses who take office in Poor Law establishments do so with a view of staying in that branch of their profession till they are unfit for further duty. On the contrary, they join the Poor Law for a few years for experience in that branch, and then either revert to Hospital work or outdoor work. Now during the few years, or say months, in some cases, these young Nurses will have to submit to this compulsory percentage off their salaries; for what, for their own benefit? No! but for establishing a fund for pensioning off Workhouse masters, relieving officers, and other not badly paid officers.

Apologising for troubling you, but the matter is one well worthy the serious consideration of the Nurses of our large Metropolitan Infirmaries, and who, although in the Poor Law at present, have no intention of staying in it all their lives.

The present Act meets all requirements, and the proposed Act is a reproach to those Guardians who have so liberally carried out the provisions of the 1864 Act.

I am, Madam, yours obediently,

SATISFIED.

[We invite the opinion of the Nurses working under the Poor Law on this important point.—ED.]

DO NURSES AGE SOONER THAN OTHER WOMEN?

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—The arguments that have been adduced on this important subject, and the theories brought forward have been very interesting, but one point of view has not been touched, and to my mind it is the crux of the whole matter.

It has always appeared to me that the manner of life adopted by Nurses is specially designed to cause them to age sooner than almost any other class. To begin with, Nurses are not hygienists. They are inveterate tea-drinkers, and, neither in Hospital life nor in private Nursing do they take the rest and sleep their very arduous work necessitates. Do not night Nurses almost habitually take strong tea when they come off duty in the morning? Do they not generally stay out till the last moment in the morning that regulations allow, and do they not, when they return from the morning walk (which is in itself, so long as it is short, a most valuable refresher) frequently again make strong tea and remain talking in their rooms for a long time, when they should be in bed and asleep?

And do they not frequently have afternoon tea-parties in their bedrooms when they are on night duty?

Again, I think Nurses during their training are very restless, and expect to have too many outside interests. Of course, a certain proportion of the outside world is an absolute necessity for mental and physical health, but no Nurse on active Hospital duty can expect to be well and to keep her youth, health, and looks, if she is always "on the go."

Golfing and cycling are now added to the Nurses' list of recreations, and I maintain that no women can go such a pace. It is not only that their legitimate work is too hard, but their pleasures and outside things are also exhausting.

Small wonder, then, that Nurses age so soon.

Sincerely yours,

A RESTFUL WOMAN.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—One reason that actresses keep their youth, as one correspondent so truthfully avers, is that they have good food. Now the modern Nurse is fed as well as we can expect Hospitals to feed her, but it is certain that a person does not build up the same capacity and vitality on "a mutton and rice pudding" diet, as on the more generous and stimulating provender which most actresses are able to get.

Another reason of the youth and elasticity of actresses and women who appear in public, is the amount of admiration they get. Nothing helps so much as the tonic of admiration and appreciation to keep one young in mind and body. And yet one more undoubted factor, and that is that the actress's work is connected with amusement and pleasure. Of course her art is work to her, and very hard work, but she has always the consciousness that she is adding so much to the pleasure and entertainment of the public, and is constantly receiving from them in return an incense and a tribute according as she ministers to their enjoyment. Now the Nurse's work must *always* be associated with pain and trouble, and that in itself is very wearing. Long hours of watching and unceasing devotion can never elicit more than the half-weary thanks of an exhausted patient, and the gratitude of two or three friends. The atmosphere of a theatre is a very different thing. So it is not fair to compare the effect on health and youth that the two so very different callings have.

Sincerely yours,
A RATHER WEARY NURSE.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)