



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.

ROMAN CATHOLIC NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I have just received a copy of the NURSING RECORD, &c., and I wish to say that in the paragraph in it referring to the Whiteparish Parish Council and the District-Nurse, and stating, that "there was prejudice roused against her on the ground of her being a Roman Catholic," is *untrue*, Dr. Keys-Wells (Churchman) and myself chose her, *knowing perfectly well* that she was a Roman Catholic; and we did this out of pity, because she told us that she had been badly treated in places because of her religion; and that, in consequence of this (her religion), it was difficult for her to get a situation. I should be extremely obliged if you would insert in your next issue what I have said.

I am, faithfully yours,
J. PATTISSON.

Whiteparish Vicarage,
Salisbury,
August 10th, 1896.

[We gladly publish the Rev. Juliar. Pattisson's letter, as it emphasises our criticism concerning Nurse Austen's case; and our remarks in no way alluded to the action of Mr. Pattisson. What we said in our issue of the 8th inst., alluding to the unfortunate friction which has arisen in Whiteparish—in connection with the District-Nurse question—was "It would seem that there was prejudice against her (the District-Nurse) on the ground of her being a Roman Catholic, and any such prejudice is much to be deprecated." We would, at the same time, draw the attention of Mr. Pattisson to our remarks concerning the necessity of altering the regulations which, it is reported, permits the District Nurse to ignore and alter the treatment prescribed by the medical officer. Until this is done, friction must continue in the Nursing affairs of Whiteparish.—ED.]

THE GENERAL COUNCIL LIST.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Will you please allow me to state that I resigned my membership of the General Council of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and was not removed, as asserted by "Fair Play" in her letter to the NURSING RECORD of August 8th.

Yours faithfully,
JANE C. CHILD.

LAW QUIBBLES IN THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Any person attending the Council meetings of the Royal British Nurses' Association might be led to suppose that the members of the Executive Council were, for the most part, gentlemen who had taken to medicine because they had failed in law. Certain of them invariably show such a profound misconception of the whole purport and meaning of law that their hearers sit dumbfounded before them, with the exception of those few resolute and brave enough to expose their fallacies.

Englishmen are often twitted with their ignorance of English law, and perhaps there is some excuse for the charge, but for crass miscomprehension of the interpretation of law and defiance of justice commend me to the ruling at the meetings of the Royal British Nurses' Association. Stipendiary magistrates and country Dogberrys would make no show in comparison.

Your readers will remember many silly little quibbles that have frivelled away time that should have been devoted to serious matters at the quarterly Councils. The notorious decision that fifty-six members of the General Council were not empowered to call a meeting together because, in the bye-laws, the power to do so was expressed in the tense "may do," in place of "shall do" so, and hereby the whole intention of that clause was rendered null and void!

And there were found on the Executive Council full-grown men—some of them holding responsible positions in life—who took this childish view of the question, or, at all events, allowed it to pass.

It would be a simple matter to fritter away every provision of the charter and every clause in the bye-laws if such absurdities were not resisted. Another of such decisions, resembling the topsy-turvy laws in a Gilbert and Sullivan play, was given at the annual meeting of the Corporation, when Miss Breay was prevented from bringing her proposed resolution before the meeting, on the alleged ground that she had *not* sent the same in a registered envelope.

Fortunately, Miss Breay had come provided with the receipt from the post-office, showing that she had duly registered the packet containing the resolution. She had, however, sent it by express messenger also, and, by some inadvertence, it had been delivered in an envelope marked "Express," instead of "Registered." It was obvious that a clerical error like that did not affect the fact that the missive was registered; nevertheless, the Chairman ruled that the resolution could not be put because the bye-law was broken!

The whole objection was a quibble, and an unworthy quibble, and one that places the Executive of the Royal British Nurses' Association in a foolish and untenable position.

Now, even if the written resolution had been sent unregistered, I question whether in the circumstances the Chairman had the right to rule as he did. The intention of this sentence in the bye-laws was manifestly inserted to prevent the MS. of proposed resolutions being tampered with in transmission, and to ensure their safe transit and safe delivery. Now, in this case there was no question but that this resolution was as Miss Breay sent it to the office. She was

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