



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.

HOURS OF HOSPITAL NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I am inclined to agree with you that, if a decrease of Nurses' working hours is arranged—and all Hospital workers are agreed, I believe, that they are too long—the increased expense must be met by the pupils themselves, as many of our Hospitals are already overpowered with debt, and it has been distinctly demonstrated of late years that the charitable public cannot or will not further increase their support of Hospitals. It is a sad fact, but when one recognises the vast increase of Nursing of late years, the terrible competition amongst the working classes—including professional men—and the enormous increase in the rates, we must come to the sad conclusion that many worthy, and doubtless generous persons, are convinced that "Charity begins at home," and that they must be just before they are generous. Yet, is it right that those interested in these great national charities, our Hospitals, should continue to overwork the Nurses; for it is useless to deny that the large majority of them are overworked—twelve and even ten hours, day after day, is a terrible strain—and yet, in conversing with Nurses themselves, few of them care to make the slightest effort to re-arrange their working hours. I think the majority are genuinely devoted to their work, and that, even with the long hours, it is a privilege to be admitted into a good Hospital for training; so that they would far rather put up with the overwork than run the risk of losing their work altogether; so that the argument that the Nurses themselves are quite satisfied because they do not openly complain, is based on a wrong supposition.

Then the extraordinary jealousy of one Hospital of the other is strongly marked amongst the Nurses of these Institutions; and to hear "an old Londoner" discuss "Bart's," "Guy's" or "Thomas," or *vice versa*, one would be led to imagine that there was but one Nursing school in the British Empire. So the question bristles with difficulties, and until the workers themselves formulate some system of reform it is to be feared the present system will continue.

Yours truly,
A HOSPITAL GOVERNOR.

[We cannot entirely agree with our correspondent. We consider that each Hospital Committee is responsible for the efficient organisation of the Nursing department in the Institution over which they preside. What is really required is a Conference of all grades of Hospital workers upon this important subject, so that a general and practical reform could be adopted.
—ED.]

RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN NURSING.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Perhaps "A Catholic Nurse," might be interested to know that a large number of Jews are treated annually at the German Hospital, Dalston, both as out-patients and in-patients.

This Institution is professedly a Lutheran one, a German Lutheran Pastor having charge of the spiritual well-being of most of the sick; though Germans of any denomination are admitted at any time.

Formerly, they were nursed together, but, owing to a religious difference with a previous staff, they are now placed in separate wards, *i.e.*, there are two male and female wards set apart for the English patients, foreign Jews and Roman Catholics. In these wards reading of the scriptures or holding daily prayers in German is not permitted.

I had charge of the female ward last year during the holiday season, and was concerned to find that the English Protestants were spiritually quite neglected by the Parish Priest, while the Roman Catholics and Jews were regularly visited by their respective Priest and Rabbi.

I deprecate strongly any interference with a patient's religious belief, and especially in the case of devout Jews, who have, alas! a perfect horror of the Name which is above every other name to us. But there are ladies connected with a mission to the Jews who undertake to visit them in the Hospitals, with, I am afraid, but scant success. Two ladies visited a poor Jewess, who was under my charge, and in the last stage of phthisis. They read and explained to her a passage from St. John's Gospel. After they had left the patient said to me, "Sister, don't let those ladies come and see me any more, they confuse me so; I feel so confused." This woman believed in the First Person of the Trinity, and loved to hear portions of the Psalms. I would like to point out to "A Catholic Nurse," if I may, that the religion of the "certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho," is not mentioned, and that, fortunately for "other denominations," the "certain Samaritan" was not a Roman Catholic. Most of us, I think, agree that there should be no question of *creed* in a profession like ours, but a question of a *right* and a *high calling*, of a Great Physician.

The kind, hospitable Sisters at the German Hospital are as pleased to show English Nurses round as they would be to receive invitations to view some of our Institutions.

The Matron was delighted with the kind invitation to the *Conversazione* during the Nursing Exhibition, which she and I thoroughly enjoyed together.

Believe me, Madam,
Yours faithfully,

M. S. S.

P.S.—I know commentaries explain a "certain man" as a Jew, and, of course, this really gives more point to the narrative, because the Jews and Samaritans were *great enemies*.

PROGRESS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—"Excelsior's" letter is suggestive, but I think it is more suggestive in *favour* of the three years system rather than against it. From the reasoning

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