

Nursing profession to believe that this will be found necessary.

Those who put forward the second grievance can surely not have read or understood the provisions of the Act; all practical Poor Law Administrators recognise that but few Nurses, porters, and female servants are fit for active duty up to 60 or 65 years of age; but the Act does not require these persons to arrive at that age before they are entitled to their Superannuation. If a Nurse, porter, or servant at 60, 55, or any younger age is unable to discharge his or her duties "with efficiency," by reason of permanent bodily infirmity, the Medical Officer, anxious to get an efficient staff, will be ready to so certify, and the officer or servant will thereupon be entitled to a Superannuation, irrespective of age, based upon his or her length of Poor Law service.

Surely the greatest champion of the Nurses cannot seriously suggest that a woman under 60, who is bodily capable of efficiently performing her duties should be maintained from an earlier age at the cost of the ratepayers.

With respect to the first grievance, let me point out that none of the officers in the Poor Law service at the date of the Act coming into operation are injured, for they are afforded the opportunity of "contracting out" and remaining under the provisions of the old Act, while all who in future enter the service will do so with eyes open, with a full knowledge that they will be subject to a small deduction to secure a *certain* Superannuation should they continue in the service, and the further knowledge that every year for which they will contribute will count, should they leave it from any cause and subsequently have to re-enter it.

With regard to the probability or otherwise of female officers requiring Superannuation, the experience of the past shows that, having regard to their relative proportions in the service, the number of female pensioners is practically as high as that of the male pensioners, and I may mention that of eleven superannuated officers of my own parish at this moment five are females.

But the whole principle of the Act is based upon the theory that only a comparatively small proportion of those who contribute will ultimately need Superannuation; we acknowledge at once that the percentage deduction would be quite inadequate if every contributor should require Superannuation, or the contributions should be returned to those who leave or die. Through death, resignation, or other causes officers drop out before they arrive at the age or need of Superannuation, and it is their payments that will provide *certain* Superannuation for their more fortunate brothers and sisters who outlive them and claim the benefits of the Act.

The proper way to look upon these contributions is that they are an insurance to render *certain*, if the officer lives to require it, ample and satisfactory Superannuation; but if not, that they have gone towards providing this for his or her more fortunate colleagues.

While I personally consider that neither the present nor future Nurses or servants have any real grievance under the Act, I am bound to say that, in order to prevent even the semblance of one, I succeeded with some difficulty in persuading the Government to accept an amendment of Mr. Boulnois, M.P., giving future Nurses and Attendants on the sick the same power of "contracting out" as is given by Sec. 15 to

all "existing officers," and there was the fullest intention of inserting this clause on the third reading.

The circumstances under which the Bill was passed on the last night of the Session rendered any attempt to do this absolutely fatal, and there was no time to get it put in in the House of Lords, but on behalf of our Superannuation Committee I have given a promise to Mr. Boulnois that if he introduces a short Amending Bill to this effect next Session, we will do all in our power to secure its passing, or, should he prefer it, that we will ourselves introduce and endeavour to carry such a Bill.

I know from experience that a "man convinced against his will remains of the same opinion still," and I am not very hopeful that this letter will convince those who are determined to make a grievance for the Nurses out of the Superannuation Act; but I do hope that it will satisfy all fair and impartial critics that there is absolutely no foundation for the allegation that the Act is one to provide pensions for the "superior" at the cost of the "lower" officers, for it has been based upon lines laid down at large representative meetings of every branch of the Poor Law Service for many years past, and the petitions in its favour have been signed by officers and servants of every grade, from the highest to the very lowest.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

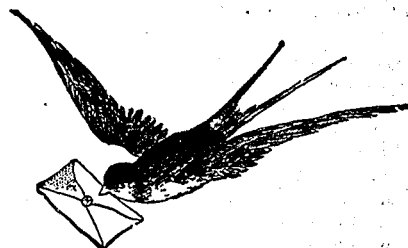
JOHN H. RUTHERGLEN,

Chairman of the Superannuation Committee
of the Poor Law Service.

Guardians' Offices,

Marloes Road, W.

October 12th, 1896.



Our Foreign Letter.

NURSING IN CAPE COLONY.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I am not a member of the Royal British Nurses Association, but as a constant reader of your magazine, THE NURSING RECORD, may I make some comment on an article which appeared in the number dated August 29th, regarding Nursing at the Cape.

I was engaged in private Nursing in Cape Town for more than a year between the end of 1893 and '95, and my experience, together with that of the Nurse (a member of the Royal British Nurses' Association) who worked with me, was very different to that of your correspondent.

The "experienced English trained Nurse is 'anything but' a waste product." Naturally in a Colony

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