



## 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.*

### CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

The Deanery, Canterbury,  
May 7th, 1897.

MADAM,—Will you kindly allow me to announce for the information of the numerous strangers now in London, and of all interested in such matters, that on May 31st Sir Henry Irving will read Tennyson's "Becket" in the magnificently restored Chapter House of Canterbury Cathedral, for the benefit of the Thirteenth Centenary Fund.

There will be an exceptional interest in hearing Sir Henry Irving read Lord Tennyson's work in the midst of the scenes in which the memorable death of the great Archbishop took place. St. Thomas Becket entered the Chapter House on the evening of December 29th, 1170, only a few minutes before his murder in the adjoining "Martyrdom."

The restored Chapter House will be re-opened by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, on Saturday, May 29th, and will be first publicly used for the reading which Sir Henry Irving is so generously to give.

After the reading, which will be at two o'clock, opportunities will be offered to visitors to see the Cathedral and the very spot where the four knights did their terrible deed.

Your obedient servant,  
F. W. FARRAR.

Specially reserved seats may be procured at one guinea each, by letter to Mr. Crow, Mercery Lane, Canterbury.

### SUPREME SELFISHNESS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Under the head of "Nursing Echoes" I observe some strictures, verbally severe, on a letter of mine addressed to the *Morning Post*. I must crave a short space for an answer. You open by stating that I object to the departure of English nurses to care for the wounded Greeks. This is inaccurate, unless the words "I am writing to protest against this one-sided humanitarianism," can fairly be twisted so as to bear this meaning. It is obvious from the first part of my letter, which you carefully, and most unfairly, fail to quote, that my protest was originally against all one-sidedness, even in humanity, and a fund for the sick and wounded of *both* sides would not lend itself to the objection that one treasury was helped to the exclusion of the other. I note also that you do not traverse my remark that "every £5 note bestowed on the Greek wounded releases the same amount from the Greek Treasury, to be expended on shrapnel and the like, to produce Turkish

wounded." Such action can hardly be regarded as neutrality, nor can it be supported by the fundamental principle of political economy, quoted in the "Echoes," "that every man has a perfect right to do what he will with his own, provided he does not infringe upon the equal liberty of any other person." The expenses incident on the tendance of the sick and wounded are part of the inevitable expenses of every war, and to defray those for one side, to the exclusion of the other, is, practically, the granting of a war subsidy.

Nor do I regard it as "supremely selfish" to hold that "we should spend on our own poor and our own suffering what we are too prone to lavish on foreigners." When our home demands are adequately satisfied we may begin to look abroad—but not before. The question, however, of selfishness and unselfishness when national interests are involved cannot, in my opinion, be argued on abstract grounds; those interests are too large. It was undoubtedly selfish, from one point of view, to condemn Napoleon to exile at Elba, yet it was the only thing to be done with so selfish an individual. It was unselfish not to press the campaign against the Boers in 1881, and we are now paying the penalty of our unselfishness, of the mistaken generosity of a Radical Government. It may sound a poor sentiment, but it is nevertheless true, that abstract virtues must often be negligible quantities when national interests are concerned, since might will always hold a stronger hand than right.

Yours, &c.,  
W. J. FORD.

Banstead, Surrey.

[The first part of our correspondent's letter in the *Morning Post* had nothing to do with the nursing question—therefore we did not quote it. He now attempts to argue that his strictures were aroused by the "one-sidedness" of supplying nursing and medical aid to the Greeks. We cannot entirely credit his ignorance of the well-known facts that France, Russia, Germany, and even England, has sent similar aid to the Turks. The whole object of his original letter appeared to be to protest against England giving *any* help to foreigners in their hour of need. With all deference to him, we repeat that in our humble judgment such a policy would be supremely selfish. We agree with him that foreigners give us scanty gratitude. But that, we take it, is not what the really benevolent seek for.—ED.]

### PRIVATE NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Your correspondent in last week's issue had no good word to say for the "motherly old bodies" referred to by Miss Harris in her able letter on the subject of private nurses. May I therefore be allowed to put in a word for these excellent people. There is no doubt that they are in demand, and will, I believe, continue to be in demand. And the reason I take it is contained in Miss Harris' description of them, they are just *motherly*, and by that virtue make up for many deficiencies in the way of skilled training. How many of our smart, highly-trained, present-day nurses possess this essential qualification of a good nurse? I am afraid the old-fashioned virtue of true motherliness, the instinct, namely, of the strong to protect and care for the weak, and of the really good nurse to devote herself to her patient, just because

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