

that the officials may know from which member each voting paper has been returned. For what purpose the officials require this information we have not been informed, and we consider it a most extraordinary action upon the part of the hon. secretaries who have no right whatever to scrutinise or interfere with the voting papers, which should be placed by the secretary in a locked ballot-box until they are opened and tabulated by the scrutineers at the annual meeting. (2) We quite agree with our esteemed correspondent that each member has a right to vote for the General Council List up to the day of the annual meeting. There is nothing in the Charter, Bye-Laws, or Regulations giving the officials power to deprive members of this privilege, or to fix the 30th of June or any other day as a limit of voting time. Last year, most illegally, all voting papers received at the office after the 30th of June were invalidated by the order of the officials, and were not counted by the scrutineers; thus many members were deprived of their right to vote. But these irregular proceedings are unhappily the rule rather than the exception in the conduct of business by "Middlesex methods."—ED.]

PROFESSIONAL DEGRADATION.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Your article on the Housemaid's Hospital was doubtless read with much interest by nurses, as well as by many interested in the nursing profession. A few weeks ago, comment was made also on the certificates of the Middlesex Hospital being granted without any examination; but is this at all to be wondered at when the probationers there are drawn from the domestic servant class? *Can* they pass an examination? Lectures are given; but what guarantee is anything but a written examination that they are thoroughly understood? Everyone will admit that domestic servants, *as a class*, are not noted for their educational abilities; their "education" having ended at fourteen years of age. Should an examination test be applied at the Middlesex, it is clear that either the test would have to be *lowered* to suit the educational standpoint of the probationers, or the probationers would have to be chosen with due regard to the difficulty of the coming examination.

I do not for one moment advocate that any candidate should be refused admission to a hospital on the ground of what her grandfather was, or was not. I only maintain that educated women alone should enter hospital nursing; a certain standard of education should be demanded by *all* hospitals; there should be an entrance examination—those who, finding themselves deficient, and being in real earnest as to the work, educating themselves to the required point by taking advantage of educational chances everywhere afforded them. If educated candidates can show a line of cultured ancestors, so much the better; if not, their own abilities and fitness should be their recommendation; then the question from an educational point of view would be settled.

If nursing is to rank as a profession, matrons cannot be too careful in their choice of candidates. It is not the nurses who are either ladies by right of birth or education that give themselves "airs," but ignorant women who have squeezed, or have been "got into" hospitals. By their bragging they have disgusted the public with "the hospital nurse," and it

is the duty of all educated nurses to band themselves together to stamp out this evil in their ranks.

My opinions on this subject have been gathered entirely from the observation of nurses themselves, and the impressions they have left behind them as well-educated or uneducated women.

I am, Madam,

Yours faithfully,

Bristol.

NOT A NURSE.

[We are glad to receive a letter from one of the public advocating a good general standard of education and examination for nurses. We, within the ranks, have long demanded this reform, but shall never reach our goal until the public recognise the justice of our cause. We feel sure our correspondent will read with interest the list suggested for the new General Council of the Royal British Nurses' Association by Mr. Fardon, the medical superintendent of Middlesex Hospital, by which the professional interests of efficiently-trained, examined, and certificated, nurses are to be absolutely controlled by the members of the Middlesex Hospital staff; and we feel sure she will sympathise with those members of the Association who are determined to protest against this extraordinary proceeding.—ED.]

PRIVILEGES *v.* RIGHTS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—In the review of "A Rose of Yesterday," published in last week's NURSING RECORD, I notice the following paragraph quoted as a "striking thought":—

"The reason why woman has privileges instead of rights is that all men tacitly acknowledge the future of humanity to be dependent upon her from generation to generation." I cannot understand what there is "striking" and worthy of quotation in this remark, the only way in which it strikes me is by its exceeding unfairness. A *privilege* I take it is a thing to which one is not entitled, but receives as a favour. A *right* on the contrary is a lawful and recognised heritage. Have women then none of these, and do they only receive those things which men recognise as their own due, as favours at the hands of the "lords of creation"? I protest that this is a degrading and impossible position for women. Assuredly a woman as well as a man possesses a lawful inheritance, handed down to her by past generations, which is hers without favour from any man. Let me have my rights, and anyone who chooses may have my privileges, and welcome. In my opinion, most of the faults of which women are accused come from this very fact, that they have for generations been educated by men, for their own selfish ends, in the belief that they have no rights, until they have almost come to believe that this is really a fact. To obtain "privileges," therefore, the least noble amongst women condescend to flattery and cajolery, thus developing both their own worst instincts and those of the other sex. Let women arise and demand their rights, and, when they have obtained them, privileges may and should be forever banished.

I cannot believe that you, Madam, who always advocate justice to women in your most interesting paper, approve of the principle of privileges *v.* rights.

I am, yours faithfully

RIGHTS *v.* PRIVILEGES.

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