



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.

A POLICY WITH A PURPOSE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I am glad to read in a letter from "A Malcontent" that she encourages us to further protest against the manner in which our principles have been betrayed by Mr. Fardon and others. I am an early member, and have before me the first Annual Report of the British Nurses' Association for 1889, and a splendid report of one year's work it is. I find that the objects for which the Association was founded are:

- (1) To unite all qualified British nurses in membership of a recognised profession.
- (2) To provide for their registration on terms satisfactory to physicians and surgeons, as evidence of their having received systematic training.
- (3) To associate them for their mutual help and protection, and for the advancement in every way of their professional work.

Now, the only way in which British nurses can be united as members of a recognised profession is by Act of Parliament providing for the legal registration of trained nurses, and yet we learn from the Medical Hon. Secretary, Mr. Fardon's, own lips at the last annual meeting that he voted in favour of a resolution "That a legal system of registration of nurses is inexpedient in principle, injurious to the best interest of nurses, and of doubtful public benefit" at the instigation of the Board of Management of the Middlesex Hospital. Therefore, either Mr. Fardon is lacking in principle or in fixity of purpose. If he believes in the resolution he supported, then he should at once resign his position as Hon. Secretary of the Royal British Nurses' Association, which was founded to obtain legal status for trained nurses; and if he does not believe in it, he was not only betraying the principles of the Association, of which he is an honorary officer, by voting for it, but he proved himself inconsistent and unworthy of his office.

Object 3 has again and again been prevented instead of encouraged during the past three years by our Hon. Officers and the Executive Committee. Every suggestion made by the nurses for their own professional advancement has been systematically obstructed. I will take the nursing lectures: the National Health Society thought these would injure their business, and so pressure was brought on our Committee, and they were dropped. The nurses desired an additional column in the Register, to be used as a Nursing Directory: this was agreed to, and then Sir Henry Burdett started his "official" publication, and again our scheme was dropped. The matrons proposed that a preliminary course of education for nurses should be defined: this again was obstructed and denied to us by the present medical

officials. The nurses asked for some organisation for mutual financial benefit in connection with their own Association: they were told to go to the Pension Fund. The matrons did not consider the training of a nurse solely in a children's hospital could be thoroughly efficient for registration without experience in nursing adult patients: this again was over-ruled by the medical men.

Poor nurses have applied for pecuniary help, and our balance-sheet shows us that in the past year, although £1,305 16s. 8d. has been spent in office expenses and management, only *twelve shillings* has been given to help those of our number who are sick and in need, and a case is on record in which *six months* after an appeal for help was made, and a small sum was at last granted, the unfortunate nurse was found to be dead and buried. Indeed, we have asked for bread and been given a stone of late years in the Royal British Nurses' Association, and this is the more shameful as, had the nurse-members had a free hand, under the matrons they trusted, the majority of whom have been insulted off the Committees, we should to-day have been an organisation of women second to none in any land, instead of being, as we are, a professional finger-post to disaster to the nurses in America and our Colonial Empire.

Your's,

ONE WHO HAS WORKED ON THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

THE NEW BYE-LAWS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—There are a number of members of the Royal British Nurses' Association who dare not speak in such a meeting as was held at the Imperial Institute, to be hissed and howled down by those terrible-looking women, with their red, impassioned faces. It may be cowardly, but the combined insolence from the chair, and the organised claque brought up to each meeting to support his ruling, and the knowledge that one becomes a marked woman if seen to oppose those in power, makes it quite impossible for the majority of women to stand up against it, and get a word out. But many of us feel burning indignation against the injustice all the same, and are quite ready to help to get up a Petition to Parliament or the Privy Council to ask for an inquiry and protection, and we should be glad to know how to set about it. I have spoken to several important private patients, members of Parliament, barristers and others, and they are unanimous in the advice that if new Bye-laws are thrust upon us, upon the vote of the Middlesex staff and their supporters, that we must make a strong protest at the Privy Council—a petition that no change shall be made in our Constitution upon the initiative of the present Hon. Officers, as they are sure to propose to deprive us of rights and privileges—until a public inquiry has been held into the cause of our grievances, whilst they have been in office. How do you think it would be to call a public meeting as was done over the mental nurse question, and discuss the matter? Many members of the public are ready and willing to help us in the matter.

Yours truly,

L. A. C.

[The Members' Rights Defence Committee are arranging a public meeting in London at the end of September, to discuss the whole question.—ED.]

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