



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 PUBLIC PROTEST.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—As a member of a London Hospital Committee, and a patient who has received much kindness from nurses, I entirely sympathize with you in your crusade of Right *versus* Might. It seems incredible to me that self-respecting matrons, sisters, and nurses should tolerate any longer the petty tyranny and insulting patronage of a certain clique of medical busybodies, who appear to be resorting to trickery in order to keep the management of the nursing profession in their power. This is a free country! and, except in the sick room, matrons, sisters, and nurses are no more dependent on doctors than they are on soldiers or sailors. Matrons, sisters, and nurses are paid, fed, and clothed by the public and subscribers, and NOT by the doctors. I can assure you that the nursing profession has the entire sympathy of the vast majority of the public, and of all right-thinking and manly medical men. "Live and let live" is a good proverb. Let nurses manage their own affairs, and doctors attend to their own affairs, and let them work together for the good of their patients.

Yours faithfully,

FAIR PLAY.

Wellington Club.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—First as a woman, and then as a working woman, allow me to express to you, and to those who are so bravely working with you, my heartfelt gratitude, and keen sympathy, in your endeavour to gain justice and due credit for the work of woman.

I was present, on the 13th ult., at the Public Meeting at St. Martin's Town Hall, and followed the proceedings with more than ordinary interest, for although the question of the day ostensibly affected nurses only, the true meaning and interpretation of the discussion had a deeper signification, a fact eloquently set forth by Miss Balgarnie.

I would now express to you the belief that upon the ultimate success of a public inquiry into the affairs of the Royal British Nurses' Association the future position of other working women very largely depends. Should the right claimed by women of having a voice in the management of their own affairs receive authoritative confirmation—and it is difficult to conceive that any independent public body could possibly adopt any other view—nothing will so contribute to the real advancement of woman. Woman as we would have her—not a mere puppet and dependent, worked by wires from behind the scenes, or gaining her own way by the use of her least

worthy attributes—but a being worthy of the name, self-reliant and courageous, who would be proud, and make good use, of the independence to which the fact of her womanhood, and the law of free-will, undoubtedly entitle her.

Let me urge you, as a champion of my sex, or rather as a champion of what my sex *can* be, to persevere in this so-called "revolt," to uphold and maintain the dignity and self-respect of the only body of women so far recognized in this land as capable and worthy of self-government as a profession. Do not, I beg of you, look for gratitude—you will not find it! Your struggle and battle will be hard and desperate, but the world and the cause will be the better for it, and our sex will have established a precedent, the importance of which cannot be over-estimated.

My sentiments are not singular. They are shared by *hundreds* of women who live in the hope that the world may be the better for their existence, but whose natural and instinctive impulse is to be saved from the unpleasantness of publicity, and the possibility—nay certainty—of such attacks as you yourself were exposed to at the same meeting in St. Martin's Town Hall.

One consolation is that the spirit that rises to the absolute disinterestedness and self-sacrifice inseparable from the high-minded espousal of a public cause, can also rise above the despicable pettiness, and malicious attacks, attendant upon success. Feline instincts will die hard, and dependent woman will, just so long as she is dependent, continue to develop parasitical and other undesirable qualities; but women who have the courage of their opinions, and a knowledge of the latent strength of their sex do not toil for our regeneration in vain.

You will find little visible reward, and much discouragement. But, your "backbone," so tenderly and anxiously referred to, will assuredly support you, and you and your noble allies will, in generations to come, be esteemed, and had in honour, as pioneers of reform.

With the united good wishes and sympathy of many women who are associated with me, and whose opinions I know I am expressing,

I am, dear Madam,

Yours gratefully,

A WOMAN SECRETARY.

NURSES' BICYCLES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—As a constant reader of the NURSING RECORD, I feel impelled to send you a letter on the subject of nurses' bicycles, as they appear to me to be somewhat of a nuisance under certain circumstances. For instance, a friend of mine, lately seriously ill with typhoid fever, required the services of two trained nurses, and she applied to an institution for their services. My friend is a widow, living in a small London house, and I must own I was somewhat surprised when both nurses arrived, bringing their bicycles *in cages*. Literally there was no place on the ground floor to store these machines, and for the whole time of their residence in the house they had to stand against the walls in the passage, blocking up much of the space, and a constant annoyance to the housemaid, as there the nurses had to clean them—and plenty of muddy marks and scratches they made on the wall. Now, I ask you, Madam Editor, if it is the custom for nurses to take their bicycles to private

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