

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.

NURSING PROGRESS IN CAPE TOWN.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Victoria Nurses' Institute,
Hof Street, Cape Town,
July 7th, 1897.

DEAR MADAM,—I am requested by the ladies of the committee of the above institute to convey their sincere thanks to you for the kind way in which you mention our efforts on behalf of the nursing profession in this Colony. We have overcome many difficulties, and foresee many more, yet we persevere, and hope soon to have the "Institute" open for all thoroughly-qualified nurses. They also wished me to return thanks for the very good advice given to nurses in the same issue, June 5th, NURSING RECORD, to consider well before coming out to this country. Qualified nursing, I am sorry to say, is yet in its infancy, and many nurses who are here find it enough to meet expenses, to say nothing of providing for old age; they are in no case better, and in some not so well paid, as at home, and living here is much more expensive. Our "Institute," we hope, will in a measure remedy that, in any case it will afford them protection and bind them together. As time goes on we hope to organise clubs, &c., for the poorer whites to help themselves in having district nurses in connection with the "Institute." There is no real poverty here, yet in many cases the people cannot afford to call in a nurse and pay her usual fee. I hope I am not taking too great a liberty in writing all this to you. I was so delighted with the copy of the NURSING RECORD, and so glad to think that in dear old London you notice what we are doing. I enclose a copy of our prospectus, and hope it may meet with your kind approval.

Believe me, dear Madam,
Yours most gratefully,
MARTHA MILLER,
Hon. Matron.

"MOSTLY F . . . S" (CARLYLE).

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—On Thursday last I was able for the first time to attend a meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association. I went to the Imperial Institute with an unprejudiced mind, prepared to hear both sides of the question, knowing personally none of the chief actors on either side. I came back devoted heart and soul to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's cause. I can find no words to express my disgust at the conduct of the majority of those present at the meeting—I was *astounded!* That a set of women, who I suppose consider themselves to be of a respectable class, could behave in so vulgar, so common, so offensive a manner, is almost incredible. It so happened that I took a seat on that

side of the hall which appeared to be occupied chiefly by Mrs. Fenwick's opponents, and it was easy to see that a great many of these women were simply following those who are at present in power, for they clapped or hissed the moment one side or other began to speak, without waiting to hear what was being said. Even so simple a statement made by Mrs. Fenwick as that the first meetings of the Association were held in her house (a fact that no one can deny) was greeted with yells of derision. The conduct of these nurses was a disgrace to womanhood, and a disgrace to the nursing profession, and I was not surprised to hear their male friends calling "Shame" and "Order."

Well, now, would these nurses like to know the intentions of those whom they applauded so vociferously? I can tell them, and I hope they will enjoy what I tell them, and feel pleased with themselves. On leaving the Imperial Institute, I had a long talk with a medical man in large and fashionable practice. I asked him, "Why is it that you doctors oppose legal registration for nurses? Why have some of you taken the management of their own Association out of nurses' hands? Why do you want to class untrained lunatic attendants with highly-trained, skilled nurses?" He replied, "Don't you know? I can soon tell you. It is because nurses are getting the upper hand too much, and they have *got to be put down.*" And it is the men who are "putting them down" that these silly women applaud to the echo, while you, Madam, who have devoted some of the best years of your life to their interests and advancement, were greeted with yells of laughter, with groans and hisses as though you had been their worst enemy. Were I in your place, I think I should feel inclined to leave them alone—to allow them the proud privilege of being "put down" to their hearts' content. It is what they seem to desire and deserve more than anything else.

I am, Madam,
Yours obediently,

M.R.B.N.A.

[We regard it as a matter for sincere congratulation that the tactics of the officials and their supporters were so apparent at the annual meeting. All fair-minded people, including the representatives of the press, were probably more influenced by the behaviour of the women alluded to by our esteemed correspondent than by the accusations and arguments used by the speakers.—ED.]

DEPRIVATION OF PROFESSIONAL PRIVILEGES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Is it possible for one who is not a member of the Royal British Nurses' Association to join in protest against the present management? I am a constant reader of the NURSING RECORD, and have watched the growth of the present struggle with painful interest. As a trained nurse of many years' standing, I had resolved early in 1895 to apply for membership of the Association, but the outbreak of hostilities, which was first made public shortly afterwards, and has continued up to the present time, made me prefer to hold aloof until I could be satisfied that the government was just and the Association likely to fulfil its original promise of usefulness.

I have felt a difficulty in arriving at a positive opinion on many questions, owing to the fact that I

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