

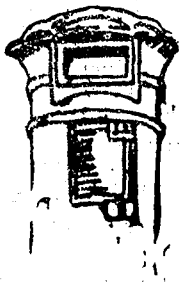
Coming Events.

February 9th.—Meeting of the Women's Total Abstinence Union, at Grosvenor House, by the kind permission of the Duke of Westminster, at 3.30 p.m. The Lady Elizabeth Biddulph will preside.

February 9th and 10th.—Annual Conference of Superintendents of American and Canadian Hospitals, at Toronto. President, Miss Agnes Snively, Matron of the General Hospital, Toronto.

February 10th.—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick will address a meeting of the East Finchley Branch of the Hornsey Women's Liberal Association, on the "Royal British Nurses' Association, and its relation to the public."

February 11th.—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick will address a combined meeting of the Finsbury Park, Hornsey, and Crouch End Branches of the Women's Liberal Association, on the same subject.



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.

MANSLAUGHTER OR MURDER?

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I am glad to see that this question is being considered by you and your readers—I may say—at last, for it is some years ago that I brought the subject forward in the *Times* and other papers, hoping it might receive the attention that it deserves. But, hitherto, it has not done so, and I think this is a remarkable fact, as it might be supposed it would strike the citizens of the wealthiest Christian capital of the world with shame and horror.

I have brought it before the notice of coroners, with whom it surely rests to do something more than is at present attempted to check inhuman practices that would seem only to belong to heathen races, but of which little notice is taken.

I can add to the facts named, by stating that in one recent week, the number of infants suffocated rose to thirty-one, while seventeen is not an uncommon number, and the annual "slaughter" is estimated by one coroner at 600, by another at 1000!

I have urged the matter being brought before mothers' meetings, and the Mothers' Union, with the suggestion that beds should be made up on chairs, when cradles cannot be afforded.

The inquiry of your correspondent is an important one, with regard to illegitimate children, and I hope it will be carried out. I have little doubt that intoxication is one of the chief causes of this—as of all other evils.

Faithfully yours,

LOUISA TWINING.

Rochester, January 31st.

THE POSITION OF THE MATRON IN POOR LAW INFIRMARIES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was very interested in your review of Miss Twining's book on "Workhouses and Pauperism," especially in her remarks upon the position of the matron in Poor Law Infirmarys. I am quite sure Miss Twining has put her finger upon a very sensitive spot when she speaks upon this subject, and upon the reason why so many well-qualified nurses decline to put in for appointments as matrons under the Poor Law. Personally, I have quite made up my mind, some time since, that nothing shall induce me to do so while the matron's position is what it is at present. Why should one, with one's eyes wide open, put one's head into the lion's mouth? If anything goes wrong with the nursing staff, who will be blamed? Why, of course, the matron, and yet quite unjustly, because she is asked to make bricks without straw, and to control the nurses without being given adequate authority over them; and, indeed, any attempt at enforcing discipline seems to be, for the most part, resented by those who should uphold it. It is manifestly wrong that all the real power should be in the hands of the medical superintendent, and that the position of the matron is exactly what he chooses to make it. No one upholds more strenuously than I do the authority of a medical man in his own province, but let him keep to it. I say this quite as much for his own sake as for that of others, for, when he descends to the position of house-keeper and general interferer, he makes himself ridiculous. The best nurses will always uphold the authority of the matron, but there are always a certain number who are not best, and it is precisely with these that the trouble comes in. Miss Twining, with her practical knowledge, recognizes that, to be adequately controlled, nurses must be under the authority of one of their own sex, and this control should naturally be exercised by the matron as head of the nursing department. When this is the case, and not before, we may hope that positions of responsibility in workhouse infirmaries will attract large numbers of highly qualified nurses.

I am, etc.,

A CERTIFICATED NURSE.

NAPPING AT NIGHT.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I have just been reading with interest the remarks in your current issue on "The Importance of Night Nursing." I am writing now while engaged in that sacred service—such I hold it—but I want to raise the question of involuntary sleep. Is it really to be considered a mortal sin, a serious lapse from "Duty," if a nurse, with or without wilful intention, with ears on the watch for the slightest sound, does doze in the later morning hours, *i.e.*, after 3.30, when all the work of the night is done, everything in readiness for the morning's work, and when sitting down is a necessity if she is to be able to cope with the rush of work which 5 a.m. brings with it? Of course, I am assuming there is no dying or highly critical case in her ward. There are many nights when, at all events, by that hour all are sleeping more or less peacefully. Or take the case, like myself at present, of a nurse in charge of one patient doing well, and himself sleeping. Is it a

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)