

which is hardly touched on in English Medical Literature." Under the head of "Apparent Death," referring to the signs of death, concerning which so many fatal mistakes have been, and, it is feared, continue to be made, under our careless system of death certification, and in the absence of death verification, the author says:—

"The stoppage of respiration, or, to use the customary expression, the last breath, is, as a matter of fact, considered by the public as the unequivocal sign of the disappearance of life. This is a grave error, gentlemen, for many persons who no longer breathed have been recalled to life by means of care and skill. The moment of death cannot therefore be assumed to be identical with cessation of respiration.

"It has been thought possible to find a more exact criterion in the pulsation of the heart. The *cor allimum moriens* has been regarded as the rule since the time of Galen; physiologists have agreed upon it. In their laboratories stoppage of the heart is looked on as the end of life; as soon as the heart of an animal that is being experimented upon ceases to beat physiologists admit that the animal is dead.

"Can we accept this criterion in forensic medicine? I do not think so. In certain medico-legal cases, the value of the sign may be disputed; the judge may ask you to say at what precise moment death took place, and that for several reasons.

"We cannot admit, in forensic medicine, that stoppage of the heart is a certain sign of death.

"At present then, gentlemen, we have no absolute criterion at all to determine the precise moment of death, even when we believe that the concomitant circumstances afford strong grounds of probability. These proofs are no more than merely probable."

Not wishing to trespass unduly on your valuable space, I will, with your kind permission, refer to this important work and its teachings for us, upon another occasion.

Yours faithfully,  
T. W.

18th February, 1898.

#### "A CRUEL DEMAND."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I beg to enclose my card, and I shall be quite prepared to give evidence before a Select Committee, on the barbarous method of nursing abdominal sections by one nurse, and depriving her of sleep, and thus of health. This form of cruelty is largely in fashion by hundred-guinea West End operators, and it ought to be put down by law. Some hospitals still keep their nurses on duty night and day with special operations. I enclose names.

Yours,  
A BROKEN-DOWN NURSE.

#### "THE WELSBACH GAMBLE."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—As the Committee of the *Nurses' Journal* have thought fit to deface the advertising columns of our "official organ" with a notice of Sir Henry Burdett's commercial nursing publication, in which he guarantees, as nurses, women who have received no hospital training, and as they have, thereby, practically given their approval to this dangerous and unprofessional publication, why

should not the Editorial Committee "go one better," and advertise the Welsbach Company, of which their ally, Sir Henry Burdett, is now chairman? Surely, with its glowing prospects, it is just the right investment for a poor nurse's hard earned savings. And why half a page? A full page of our journal might surely be thus devoted to our "financial interests."

Yours truly,  
SISTER.

[We presume our correspondent means to be sarcastic, having read the accounts, given in the daily press, of this concern.—ED.]

#### THE SELECTION OF NURSING CANDIDATES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was very glad to read in the NURSING RECORD last week, your suggestion that representatives of the nursing profession should have seats upon the Committees which select candidates for the various Nursing Services. The suggestion is evidently a most practical one, and, moreover, only just to the various candidates. What, for instance, would medical men say to the appointment of medical candidates by a committee upon which there was not one medical man? Beyond this, women are undoubtedly more likely to be able to judge of the suitability of other women for positions of this sort; for any committee of men, composed of even the very best specimens of the genus, is apt to be considerably influenced by the outward appearance, and the ability of a candidate to possess herself of a becoming bonnet consequently weighs, no doubt insensibly, but certainly considerably, with her judges, while the more enduring qualities of capacity for self-sacrifice, steadfastness and devotion to duty, are apt to be somewhat underrated. I do not mean to say that a conscientious committee would deliberately select an inferior candidate, because of her smartness—certainly not, only—I put it to your readers—given a pretty girl, well dressed, and a plain one, possessed of all the virtues, to choose between, which will any committee of men select? Of course, the attractive girl *must* be the best nurse. The fact is so plain as to go without saying in the minds of at least ninety-nine men out of one hundred. Is it not so?

Yours obediently,  
ONE OF THE CROWD.

#### LINEN.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I read your reply to a correspondent upon the subject of linen and stock-taking with much interest. It is practical details of this sort, which one so often comes across in the NURSING RECORD which make it so interesting and helpful, and in reality, what it claims to be, the representative organ of the nursing profession. Perhaps you will allow me to say, therefore, how much I appreciate the RECORD and how grateful I am to you for conducting it. It is a great thing for us nurses to feel that we have a paper edited by one who has had such unique experience of nursing matters as yourself.

Yours, etc.,  
A REGULAR SUBSCRIBER.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)