



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.*

THE LEPROSY CONGRESS AT BERLIN.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—The recent Leprosy Conference at Berlin, an able article on which appeared in the NURSING RECORD AND HOSPITAL WORLD of December 18th, has once more brought to public notice a subject of paramount importance, particularly as regards the health and well-being of the vast populations in India, as well as in most of our Crown Colonies. About 300 delegates and others interested in the leprosy question were present. The main object of the conference was to assist the health authorities of the various countries where leprosy prevails, in combatting this terrible disease. Various conflicting opinions prevailed, and it is curious that Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson's (the English delegate) theory found no supporters. It will not be forgotten that, in 1893, a Leprosy Commission was appointed in England, and its conclusions were published. Unfortunately the Commissioners, when urgently invited by Dr. Roger G. S. Chew to examine a number of lepers who had been inoculated with the disease by means of vaccination, refused the invitation, and their conclusions have been largely discredited in consequence. Leprosy has been shown by numerous authorities to be a bacterial and inoculable disease, and that it has been extensively propagated in India, Hawaii, and the West Indies by means of arm-to-arm vaccination. Citations from the works of some of the highest recognized authorities, with numerous facts proving that this mutilative and incurable malady is disseminated at the point of the lancet, were laid before the Royal Commission on Vaccination, as will be seen in the third volume of evidence. The subject has been exhaustively treated in a volume by Mr. William Tebb, entitled "The Recrudescence of Leprosy and its Causation." It may be mentioned that nearly all the delegates and specialists who attended the Berlin Conference are known as strong partisans of vaccination, and no amount of evidence would have convinced them that Jenner's reputed discovery was capable of imparting to previously healthy persons so repulsive and incurable a malady as leprosy. The facts and testimonies adduced by the author of the work referred to are still unanswered and unanswerable. I shall be pleased to send literature on the cause of leprosy to anyone sending a large stamped and addressed envelope.

Yours faithfully,

JAS. R. WILLIAMSON.

42, Stibington Street, N.W.

[Can our correspondent prove that one single child has been inoculated with leprosy instead of ordinary vaccine lymph? If not, his argument appears to us to be unsubstantial.—ED.]

OFFICIAL DESPOTISM.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—The overwhelming majority of a packed meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association may in the eyes of some be a matter for congratulation. Certainly the officials, from the greatest to the least, must occupy an unique position in their conduct of the business of the Association. They send round notices summoning a meeting of the members (for the week before Christmas, a time well known to all to be one of great pressure), some of whom, at great inconvenience and expense, come from long distances, to discuss new Bye-Laws; but what happens? Though the charter particularly stipulates that—"No new Bye-Law shall be added, and no standing Bye-Law shall be altered or rescinded at a general meeting, unless such addition or alteration be formally proposed and seconded by members of the Corporation at the said meeting," we were not allowed to do so, the chairman ruling out of order all criticism adverse to the official despotism. If this is business, small wonder indeed that women who think differently and wish to vote so, will not attend a meeting a second time subjecting themselves to insults such as are usually confined to street rowdiness. Is there no other way of objecting to the action of the officials than by wasting time and attending meetings to be publicly insulted? I must apologize for pointing this fact out, as you are but too well acquainted and have borne far too much of the heat and burden of the day to need reminding of it. I for one am loth to give up what is ours and submit to so great an injustice, but really these repeated insults are too disgraceful, and from those who say they are only working for our good! If such is philanthropy, may we not say we prefer fair play and no favour, though by it we lose the smiles and bows of those we once followed, and by whom we may, by force of might over right, be sent to the wall? Much as one objects to washing dirty linen in public, we must appeal to the British public to save us from being deprived of what we should hold sacred and hand down to our successors.

Yours very truly,

CLARA LEE,

M. R. B. N. A.

Cheltenham.

Notice.

MISS FLORENCE M. HEWETT, member of the General Council of the Royal British Nurses' Association, informs us that as she was at Cambridge, and unable to attend the Meeting on the 17th ult., she sent a registered letter addressed to the Members of the Royal British Nurses' Association, assembled in Special General Meeting, protesting against the new Bye-Laws, and expressing the opinion that an inquiry into the affairs of the Association would be beneficial. Miss Hewett presumes her letter was, therefore, amongst the batch already opened, and withheld by the officials from the persons to whom they were addressed, an absolutely inexcusable proceeding upon their part, although unhappily one to which the Members are now well accustomed. We are of opinion that the Acting Secretary, Miss Leigh, should have arranged that letters thus addressed should have been opened in the presence of the Members, to whom they were directed. We have also received other letters upon this subject, which we are compelled to hold over until next week.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)