

2nd: Amongst the invited guests were many of the Governors and the whole of the Committee of the institution. It is not always well to place implicit confidence in newspaper reports, which are sometimes unintentionally misleading;

3rd: The supper for the occasion was principally provided by the generosity of the tradesmen of the town;

4th: For your information, I may add that I am sorry to say that Mr. Hall Caine was not present.

Trusting that this will clear up any doubts there may be on the matter,

I remain, yours truly,

JAMES M. BENSON,

North Riding Infirmary,  
Middlesbrough

House Surgeon.

[We are obliged to our correspondent for his information, although this corroborates the essential facts which we quoted from the local press last week. We are the more convinced that to utilize Hospital wards—provided by public charity for the relief of sickness and suffering—for the purposes of public gaiety and festivity, is not only anomalous in the highest degree, but is also calculated to injure such Hospitals in the opinions of many compassionate and truly philanthropic people.—ED.]

#### PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I read with much interest your remarks referring to the opening of telegrams and letters, addressed to night nurses, by the Matron of the hospital, and I know a case where a nurse was deprived of her certificate, by it coming to the Matron's knowledge, through opening a nurse's telegram, that she was the unhappy mother of an illegitimate child. How much happier for everyone had the Matron remained in ignorance of the sad past! The Matron's argument was that the nurse had entered the hospital with fraudulent references, that she had been guilty of deceit and untruth, and was, therefore, unworthy of trust and a certificate—which she refused to sign. But this, of course, was an unique case, although the principle involved in withholding telegrams from night nurses is altogether bad; as you say, we are not children, and have certainly a right to judge for ourselves. How can you expect women who are subject to such tutelage for years in hospitals to possess the independence of character, and personal responsibility, to form a profession? I have heard many members of the public complain of the lack of common sense upon the part of trained nurses. The fact is, we obey, and obey, until we become incapable of forming opinions or judging for ourselves. When will Matrons give marks for common sense as well as obedience?

Yours,

"A GIRLISH THING—AGED FORTY."

#### OFFICIAL PRESSURE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Your remarks about the telegrams addressed to night nurses being opened and read by a person to whom they are not addressed, are timely and only one more proof of the deprivation of personal rights, which some Matrons consider justifiable in their relations with junior officials. A specimen of this attitude of mind upon the part of a

Matron lately came to my knowledge over the much-disputed Bye-Laws of the Royal British Nurses' Association, of which I am a member. The Matron in question sent for one of the staff nurses just before the Special General Meeting, and said "she hoped to be able to arrange for her to attend the meeting, and that she wished her to vote for the Princess!"

Now, I ask the public, could anything be more unjustifiable upon the part of a superior officer in a public institution? You will observe the Matron did not say "I wish you to hear the arguments for and against the new Bye-Laws" (perhaps she was aware discussion would be suppressed) "and vote as you think right," but I, your superior officer, want you to go to the Meeting *pledged* to record your vote for a person and not for a principle, and used the name of Her Royal Highness Princess Christian to influence the voting in an altogether unjustifiable manner. This method of bringing pressure to bear upon a subordinate officer—employed so openly at all General Meetings of late years—by some of the Hon. Officers, is most unconstitutional and dangerous, and naturally deters self-respecting women from attending such meetings at all. Again, a Matron in the North of London paid her nurses' expenses to attend the last meeting, "to support the Hon. Officers," which they did blindly, listening to no arguments, but watching for the signs so obviously given from the platform by nods, smiles, frowns, upholding of hands, etc. In fact, a more discreditable conduct of business, than that encouraged from the platform, would be impossible to conceive; and the *sotto voce* remarks made by those who profess to be anxious for unity and discipline in the Nursing profession, were eagerly transcribed by more than one reporter present, who as seated close enough to the platform to overhear various most undignified remarks. Official pressure upon subordinate officers is at all times to be condemned, and it is the opinion of many members of the Royal British Nurses' Association that the Committee of a certain Metropolitan Hospital will have a rude awakening if they continue to permit the present scandalous condition of affairs.

Yours truly,

A REGISTERED NURSE.

#### THE FIRST NURSING PROFESSOR.

To the Editor of The "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was very interested to read in the recent issues of the NURSING RECORD that the University of Texas has shown the way in which the teaching of nursing is to be placed on a scientific basis, and has instituted the head of the training school of the City of Galveston a "Professor of the University with a Chair of Clinical Nursing." It is at least some satisfaction to those in this country who are "contending earnestly" to retain the privileges which they hold in trust for succeeding generations, that in America the nursing profession is not occupied in defending its rights and privileges already won, but is progressing by leaps and bounds. I for one look hopefully towards America, and seem to see the international emancipation of nurses accomplished through its means. The cloud at present is no bigger than a man's hand perhaps, but it is gathering force, and we, in the old country, will be carried along with a rush when the storm bursts. But why, oh, why, are we always to be dragged at the cart tail, instead of being in the van of

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)