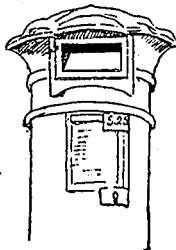


Letters to the Editor.

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.

SISTERS IN THE SOUDAN.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—As one who has seen for herself the brave little band of Army Nursing Sisters, and admired their work, both at home and abroad, may I re-echo your sympathy with them in their disappointment over the Soudan campaign.

Several of the Sisters I knew at Cairo in 1888-89, had three war medals pinned on their little scarlet capes—one of them, indeed, had five medals—and, as a sincere lover of my own sex, it used to do my heart good to notice (at the "soldiers' concerts" given by the regiment my husband commanded) that, except those for "The Colonel," no cheers were so hearty and prolonged as those for "The Sisters. God bless them!"

Yours faithfully,

Debdale Hall, Mansfield. C. TALBOT COKE.

A QUESTION OF DISCIPLINE.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I should not venture to discuss the above question in your columns, were it not that one very important aspect of the case has been omitted. "Matron" in her letter refers to small county hospitals, not to those institutions where there are Medical Superintendents. The position of a House-Surgeon and a Medical Superintendent are quite on a different footing. The point I wish to raise is that I have formed the opinion, from my personal experience, that in every small hospital the Matron should act as Sister-Matron—that is she should be the Head of the Nursing—and it should be her duty to accompany the House-Surgeon and Honorary Medical Staff during their rounds.

In hospitals where this arrangement is in force, perfect discipline can be maintained, because the Matron is Superintendent of Nursing, and of Nurses, and being herself the Housekeeper, there is no divided interest, and the general good of the whole institution is the object of her work. In a small place there is not room for divided authority—nor in a large one either for the matter of that. I have known the Sister-Matron system work most satisfactorily,

I remain, yours faithfully,

SISTER-MATRON.

[We are entirely in sympathy with our correspondent's views.—Ed.]

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—My advice to the lady of whom "Matron" writes, is to go to her Committee and quietly tell them how matters stand, making at the same time a request that her duties and position may be defined as regards the Nurses, Nursing, and House-Surgeon. I do not for

a moment think any Committee would desire their Matron to be ignored and bullied, and generally set aside in such a manner—else, why have a trained nurse and a lady? I entirely doubt if they would support a House-Surgeon in such preposterous claims, for they would see how detrimental such a state of things must be to the discipline of the whole household. Nurses and servants soon take their tone from the superior officers, and would quickly follow suit in ignoring the Matron. "Give and take" are good and necessary actions, but can be carried too far.

ANOTHER MATRON.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Alas! What a storm I have brought on my poor friend's head! One and all of your correspondents agree that it is a case of the the wrong woman in the wrong place, but those who know her and her work think differently. As a matter of fact, she did report her House Surgeon's rudeness to her Committee some week's ago, and received, as she has always done, their cordial support. She thinks it better, however, for the good tone of the hospital to avoid him for the short time he is remaining in office, and there I think she is right. His temper is naturally not improved by what has occurred, and being a boor, he would be only too glad of the chance of insulting her before her subordinates. It was not advice for her that I was asking. I only mentioned her as a case in point of what I *know* many Matrons have to endure. It is possible that "M. M." may be in charge of a hospital, which from some cause attracts a better class of man as house-surgeon than does the small institution with no medical school attached, of which I wrote last week. If so, let her thank Heaven for her good fortune. Even she admits, however, that she has found some of them "trying." With regard to her plan of visiting the wards, I, for one, disagree entirely. Touchy as some House Surgeons may be I consider that in all that concerns the treatment of the patients they, in the absence of the Medical Staff, are supreme, and I cannot but think that to allow him to take his Report from, and give his instructions to, a Senior Probationer, while the Sister, who is alone responsible for those instructions being carried out, is going round the same Ward in the train of the Matron, is not only subversive of discipline, but is also bad for the nursing, bad for the patients, and must be very galling to the House-Surgeon so galling that one can only believe that "M.M." was correct in saying that "she *can* be very nasty," to account for his tolerating the situation. No. Let the House Surgeon have the wards, and the Sisters to himself while he is making his rounds, but let him also understand that the Matron, as Chief Nurse and Superintendent of Nursing, is at liberty to enter his domains at that sacred time, if she has occasion to do so, without being insulted before her subordinates. Thanking you for airing this matter.

I am, Madam, yours faithfully,

"MATRON."

THE PROTECTION OF NURSES' UNIFORM

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record"

DEAR MADAM,—Being much interested in any thing connected with Nursing, I am so glad to see the subject of Nurses' Uniforms under discussion in your valuable RECORD, and the suggestion that it is time something was done to protect them. I sincerely hope

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