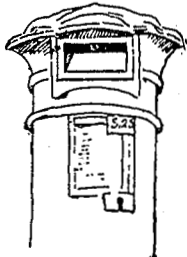


Letters to the Editor.

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 WORK OF WOMEN ON HOSPITAL BOARDS.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I have read with much interest the paper published in your valuable journal last week on the work of women on Hospital Boards by Miss Lucy Walker. It would seem as if in the United States they carry things somewhat to an extreme, at least, I think few Matrons in this country would care to have to work in conjunction with ten sub-committees of women in addition to the Committee of Management. But there can nevertheless be no doubt, as you yourself pointed out in the discussion, that on this committee, and in an administrative position, women can do valuable service, and it is a distinct loss to our public institutions that they are not more often found serving on committees. I suppose the reason is partly that men have so long exclusively been appointed to these positions that when vacancies occur as a matter of course men are nominated to fill them, partly also because it is only of comparatively recent years that women have been trained in business habits, and the possession of such habits is certainly a very necessary qualification for public work. Now, however, that there are many women who are thoroughly capable in this respect, it seems a great pity that their talents are not more frequently requisitioned. Women give freely and readily, both time and unsparing labour, to further the welfare of any cause in which their interest is aroused, their practical knowledge of domestic management would be of great value, while their agile brains and the power of intuition they as a rule possess would on many occasions prove a welcome assistance to their more ponderous colleagues. Added to this their sense of responsibility, and their conscientiousness with regard to the disbursement of public funds is, as a rule, extreme. On all these counts the public would, I think, be well advised to requisition their services in the administration of public institutions.

I am, dear Madam, yours faithfully,
A BELIEVER IN MY SEX.

THE TERM MIDWIFE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I, for one, feel grateful to you for your protest on behalf of midwives, for I am a midwife as well as a trained nurse, and I do feel most keenly the injustice of having all the sins of ignorant women who have never in their lives had a day's training, laid at our door. Of course, one knows that all the practices which you describe exist; but I do say most emphatically that the trained midwife is the person who perhaps most constantly wages war against them. So far as I have known midwives, and I know a good many, their routine practice when leaving a mother

after she and the child have been made comfortable after delivery, is to say to the woman in attendance, "I will come back again in about six hours' time; meanwhile, don't let Mrs. — raise herself up in bed, and don't give her any gin and water; and don't give the baby any gruel, or any butter and sugar; and send round to me if you should want me." I very much doubt if a medical man gives all these directions for the simple reason that more often than not he is ignorant of the prevalence of these practices, but a midwife, owing probably to the fact that she acts as nurse to her patients finds during the course of her daily visits how common these things are, and she wages incessant war against them. It therefore is doubly hard on her that *she* should be accused of all these atrocities, firstly, because she hates them with a holy hatred, and, secondly, because she well knows the loss of professional prestige which she undergoes in consequence. The only thing to protect us so far as I can see is registration. I do not mean registration of the three months' trained specialist, but registration as nurses. To my thinking all nurses ought to receive obstetrical training during their three years curriculum, and then all this discussion about the registration of midwives would be ended. I wonder, by the way, why the term *registration* is retained with regard to midwives when the proposition is to *license* us, a very different matter, and one to which I for one most strongly object. I think the use of the term "registration of midwives" with regard to the present Bill is calculated to mislead the public.

I am, dear Madam,
Your faithfully, L. O. S.

UNDERTAKERS' COMMISSIONS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—From time to time you have drawn attention in the NURSING RECORD to the fact that undertakers offer commissions to the Superintendents of Nursing Homes in order to secure their "custom," and we all know that the mind of the medical profession has been exercised on this subject lately by the assertion on the part of undertakers that some of its members are approachable. Nevertheless, so far as I have heard any comments on the question, it seems to be considered impossible that the offer of a "consideration" on the part of an undertaker to a nurse or medical man can be anything but the most exceptional occurrence. I think therefore that you may be interested to learn that such an offer was recently made to a friend of my own, the Superintendent of an Incurable Home, the custom of the Home being therefore specially desirable to annex from an undertaker's point of view. An offer was made by an undertaker, a relation of one of the patients, moreover, in quite unvarnished terms to my friend, that whatever commission the undertaker at present in possession allowed her, he would do the same. He took it quite for granted, you observe, that she was receiving a commission at the present time. He was sent about his business with scant ceremony. I should say he probably went away and reflected on his folly, in not "going one better" than his confrère! One cannot also help wondering if there is no etiquette between undertakers which prohibits their annexing one another's "practice."

Yours faithfully,
A REGULAR READER.

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