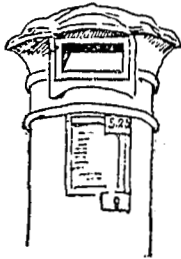


Letters to the Editor.**NOTES, QUERIES. &c.**

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.

HOSPITAL CABINS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I have read with great interest the letter from "Traveller" *re* Hospital Cabins which appeared in your issue of the 20th ultimo, and that of Miss M. H. Kingsley on the same subject which appeared in your issue of February 3rd, also your very able Editorial on the same subject which shows a wonderful knowledge of the sufferings of invalids at sea. To yourself and your two correspondents all travellers by steamer to West Africa in particular, and any other part of the world in general, will be, I am sure, most grateful for your powerful assistance in bringing before the public the terrible necessity there is that passenger ships should have a Hospital Cabin, and that they should also carry at least one professional nurse, in fact for vessels calling at Tropical Ports this ought to be a *sine qua non*.

My experience of the requirements of invalid passengers has been mostly gained by repeated voyages to Western Africa and many years residence in that part of the world. During my stay in the Oil Rivers District, lately known as the Niger Coast Protectorate, it fell to my lot to pass through two of the most deadly epidemics that have visited West Africa during the last 40 years, in both of which I often heard the Doctors say "had they had a few professional nurses to carry out their orders the mortality would not have been anything like the high rate it was."

In your editorial you mention a few of the woes of a sick passenger; I therefore think I may be allowed to point out a few also, and by them to account in some way for the great mortality there is amongst sick passengers within a few hours of their being put on board a homeward-bound steamer. As an example I will describe what I have often witnessed. Many serious cases are brought down from the up-river stations and dumped on board the mail steamer a short time before the vessel sails from a port; the excitement of the change and the hope of at last being on the way home buoys up the patient, and to the casual observer there does not seem much the matter with him. The doctor of the ship may be out of the ship at the time of the patient's arrival, as he (the doctor) is often in great demand either for consultations with the Port Doctor, or in attending to the Port Doctor's work, owing to the latter being down himself with an attack of fever. What happens in such a case? The sick passenger, what with the excitement of getting on board and seeing friends he has not seen for months, appears to have for the moment little the matter with him; the reaction, however, shortly sets in, he feels drowsy, owing perhaps to the stronger air he breathes at the mouth of the river to what he has been accustomed to in his up-river station, or some good-hearted but foolish friend has taken upon

himself to prescribe a gin cocktail for the sick man; but whatever the cause the next thing that occurs is that he tumbles off to sleep coiled up on a Madeira sofa on the saloon deck of the ship; shortly after the anchor is weighed, and the ship's bow points out to sea, meeting a strong sea breeze which chills the sick man to his very marrow, lucky for him if some good-hearted fellow passenger wakes him up, but oftener than otherwise he lies there till morning and the mischief is done. This is no fancy picture, as many who have travelled in West African steamers can testify, and it is this first few hours on board that accounts for so many deaths shortly after getting on board the homeward bound steamer.

Cases like the above could not very well occur on board ships with a hospital cabin and a professional nurse. At least, there would be much less chance for such a state of things as I have depicted. The next thing to be considered is who is to pay for them? The reply is the shipowner cannot be expected to tax himself for the public benefit, though that very public spirited West African steamship owner, Mr. A. L. Jones, of Liverpool, has done so to the extent of £350 per annum for three years in connection with the Colonial Nursing Institute, besides giving all kinds of assistance and donations towards the study of tropical diseases. This gentleman has also achieved wonders towards the preservation of life in West Africa during the last fifteen years by the improved class of steamers he has built for the trade; but, alas, he has not endowed them with hospital cabins or nurses. I believe he would do this to-morrow if he were sole owner, but unfortunately he has shareholders to deal with, and business is business. As I said above, the shipowner cannot be expected to pay, then who must? The reply is, this must be done by the Home Government in conjunction with the Colonial Governments (more especially the colonies in tropical latitudes) subsidising the steamship companies.

To get this done public sympathy must be aroused, and this can only be done by appeals through such recognised sources of information on the subject as the **NURSING RECORD AND HOSPITAL WORLD**.

I am afraid the British taxpayer might be inclined to ask why Government should be called upon to pay. My answer is, because in the first place (especially speaking of Western Africa) a very large percentage of the passengers carried by the West African and other colonial lines are Government officials, and it is in the interest of the British taxpayer that these gentlemen should be well looked after, for do they not go out to unhealthy climates and thus risk their lives for the benefit of the mother country? The same can be said of the civilians, for without them of what use would be the vast territories in Western Africa now under British rule without the pluck and the enterprise of the British merchants, who risk their money, and their employées their lives, in opening up and developing the country, thus establishing new markets for the sale of the products of England's great manufacturing centres.

I remain, dear Madam,

Yours sincerely,

C. DE CARDI.

3, Norfolk Mansions,
Prince of Wales Road, S.W.

SOCIETY WOMEN AND THE WAR.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I regret to take up valuable space in your paper, but feel sure that you will do even an

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)