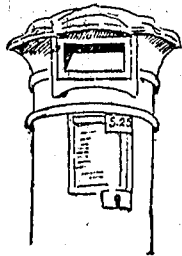


Letters to the Editor.

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.

NEEDED, A SISTERLY SPIRIT.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR EDITOR,—I must send a line to the RECORD to express my appreciation of the Special Number on April 7th. The international character of your paper, and the wide view it takes of the nursing world, is in my opinion its chief good to us at home, where more and more we are becoming convinced of our narrow views on nursing matters. Specially interesting was the interview with that fine organizer, Miss Monk, of King's College Hospital, and her methods only require to be more widely known to be appreciated and adopted by other schools. How is it that all this splendid work has been accomplished and we nurses have never had it brought to our notice before? Surely if one of us is endowed with the gift of organization to the extent of the Sister-Matron at King's, we less favoured beings ought to participate in the results of her labours and talents. I feel sure so earnest a worker would not grudge us her help. If only there were a more sisterly spirit amongst Matrons, much more could be done for nursing and nurses. It does seem a pity adverse influences and a wrong spirit should keep us apart; but it is no use Matrons attempting co-operation unless they have plenty of scope for their energies. Their undignified position in the R.B.N.A. will bring them nothing in the future but heart burning and futility, as it has done in the past. I was speaking to a home hospital matron a few days ago and asking her to bring some excellent work in home hospital arrangements to the notice of the profession, and she replied that she had had a hint that if she wished for patients she must "take no part with the enemy!" The "enemy" presumably being those matrons and nurses who have loyally supported the *principles* of professional association of nurses, and State Registration for Nurses, upon which the R.B.N.A. was founded, flourished and won its Charter!

So you see, dear Editor, how disheartened one would become if nursing politics in this country alone were presented to one's view, and how thankful one is to observe by reports in the RECORD that, *internationally*, nursing matters are progressing satisfactorily, and that the Matrons' Council is in touch with the leading spirits in our colonies and in the States, and if we cannot at present keep up with them we can admire and appreciate their work. I feel certain that their progress is good for the nursing world in general. With congratulations on the ever-constant progress and usefulness of the RECORD, and heartiest good wishes for its continued prosperity.

I remain,

"ONE WHO READS EVERY WORD."

THE PROFESSIONAL NURSE AND HER TRAINING.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was greatly interested in the article published by you last week by Dr. Joseph Price under the above heading, and to note that he brings out a point which emphatically needs emphasising, namely, as we must all agree, that nurse-training schools have not yet attained to the high standard which it is possible for them to attain, and to which, therefore, in the interest of the sick, it is surely incumbent on them to attain. The reason Dr. Price assigns for this condition is no doubt the correct one, namely, that Boards of Management are more often selected from financial considerations (necessary, but not all sufficient), than for their knowledge of hospital management. In the case of the medical profession this lack of knowledge on the part of Committees, does not influence medical education prejudicially in the same way, because this is determined, to a large extent, in this country, by the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and the General Medical Council. But who looks after the standard of nursing education? Each hospital does precisely as it sees fit in this matter, and, moreover, as a rule, resents most bitterly the suspicion of a suggestion that its system (or want of system) is not quite perfect, the very best in the world. When shall we have a standard of nursing education laid down by nurses for nurses, in the same way as the standard of medical education is defined by medical men?

ONE WHO DESIRES IT.

ORGANIZATION AND REPRESENTATION.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—How it is that the pupils turned out of American hospitals are so much abler than our own? This is a question which must force itself before Superintendents of Nursing in this country. I do not mean so far as their work is concerned. There I think English nurses can hold their own with anyone. But certainly American nurses realize more than we do the duty they owe to their profession as a whole. There can be little doubt that they owe much to the fact that they are brought up under a democracy: every individual is taught to have an opinion on affairs of State, and to express it. This is not permissible only, it is the *duty* of citizens. With us, on the contrary, our training seems largely directed to eliminating any individuality which we may originally possess and to make us into unreasoning automatons. Originality is regarded with suspicion, and the whole duty of nurses is held to be obedience. I really am a law-abiding person, but I am fairly sickened with this constant cry of "obey, obey, obey." Nobody ever says "think for yourself." Yet surely this is a duty also, and obedience to those in authority, when run to seed, is apt to degenerate into servility. It may be easy to govern in this way, but the result is unhealthy; witness the eccentricities, to use no stronger word, of nurses when the restraint of the training school is removed, and they enter the ranks of private nurses. Will not some matron arise in this country who will teach her probationers the duty of thinking as well as of obeying? I feel sure the result would be that better stuff would be turned out from that school than is the case in the majority at the present time.

Faithfully yours, A BORN DEMOCRAT.

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