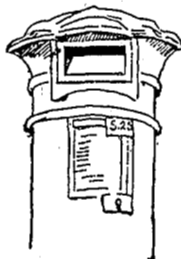


**Letters to the Editor.**

NOTES, QUERIES. &amp;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 WAY OF THE WORLD.***To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—Much as every humane person must grieve to learn of the suffering of our troops in South Africa from the nursing system clung to so tenaciously by the War Office, it is a subject for congratulation that the misery and death of so many splendid soldiers will not be in vain, and that the courage of the few, notably Mr. Burdett Coutts and Mr. Murray Guthrie, in making the whole scandal public, is already producing reforms in the nursing in military hospitals, which those responsible would have continued to neglect had not they been compelled by the force of public indignation to move. I have had personal friends for many years amongst the Army Nursing Sisters, and one and all have complained of the bad system in favour at the War Office, but not one amongst them has had the courage to bring the matter before the Queen, as head of the Army, because we must remember that according to our Constitution, the Monarch is still in power over the land forces. All the Sisters I know have said they dare not give opinions to the Medical Officers nor any information to the Press. This *may* be all right so long as a woman is in the Army Nursing Service, but why has there not been one woman who has left the service, with sufficient pluck to show the whole bad system up? I often see your excellent paper, and sincerely congratulate you upon being the first and only organ in the press to press home, in and out of season, for years past, the necessity for the reorganization of the military nursing system, and I hope your suggestion of forming a nursing department at the War Office, presided over by a Chief Executive Nursing Officer, may be speedily adopted by the Government.

Yours truly,

**"ONE WHO HAS SEEN ACTIVE SERVICE."**

[The reason working women will not take the initiative in agitating for reforms is in many instances an economic one. They have got to earn their bread, and it is difficult enough in all conscience, without arousing the animus of the powers that be. All the same we condemn this pusillanimity. The fact that this journal has continued to agitate for the efficient care of our sick soldiers—not as a fine ladies' fussy charity, but as a nation's duty to its brave defenders—has not been counted unto us for righteousness, and the mere suggestion that we should take some small part in helping to evolve order out of chaos aroused a lively flutter of opposition in army medical circles. We hope, however, to see all the reforms suggested in our journal duly adopted in time, even if put forth as the original ideas of the most determined obstructionists. These little ironies are quite

common in official life. Meanwhile we thank our medical reader for his kind words of appreciation.—**ED.**]

**THE VALUE OF CERTIFICATES.***To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—I enjoyed "A Lancashire Matron's" splendid letter in your last issue, but the certificate question is one of so much importance, that even in two columns she left many points untouched in connection with it. I think everyone will agree that no Nurse who has been on night duty should be called upon to undergo a severe theoretical examination on the following day, it is most unfair, and failure to satisfy examiners is not surprising under such circumstances. I wish to ask one question in relation to nurses' certificates, and that is—"Is it just that a Matron should have the power to deprive a nurse of her certificate after a definite term of training"? At the Middlesex Hospital, a lady probationer could as it were, buy a certificate by paying a guinea a week for a year's so called training, but the regular probationers who were engaged for a term of three years' training, if considered satisfactory, were awarded a certificate without any examination at the end of that term, if they severed their connection with the hospital. If, however, they elected to remain in the service of the hospital, the Lady Superintendent retained their certificate, and they did not get it until they left, and moreover, I believe she had the power to withhold it altogether should a nurse displease her in the interim. Surely such power should not be permitted to any official, or indeed, to any committee. What is your opinion?

Yours truly,

**"AN OLD LADY PUPIL."**

[The whole organization of the so-called nursing school at the Middlesex Hospital is obsolete. The awarding a certificate at the end of one year to women who pay a guinea a week for permission to avoid hard work and a thorough training, is quite inexcusable in these days, when nurses have been relieved of scrubbers' work; and the retention of a certificate earned by a regular probationer at the end of a definite term of training by a paid official, or indeed by a hospital committee, is a gross piece of tyranny, which we can hardly believe is still in force *even* at the Middlesex Hospital, but if the Lady Superintendent is still empowered to use this professional thumb-screw, it is a very scandalous thing, and it is high time the Middlesex nurses were protected from so unfair a method of control.—**ED.**]

**THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.***To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—Your correspondent, "A Lancashire Matron," is, I think, quite right in her contention that nurses who are being examined for their certificates should, whether they are on night or day duty, be off duty for the days of the examination. After beginning work at 7 o'clock in the morning, doing all the bed-making, washing of patients, sweeping, dusting, and scrubbing, which are included in the ordinary routine of

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