

bound by the personal arrangement between the superintendent and employer, is a nurse guilty of insubordination? This is my case. I became a member of a certain Private Nurses' Society. In the rules under which I am engaged it is distinctly stated that nurses shall have their food provided otherwise than in the servants' hall or with the domestic staff. Upon arrival at the residence of a wealthy west-end patient, I was informed by the mistress that "she had arranged with the Lady Superintendent that I was to have my meals in the Room" (that is in the house-keeper's room, with the upper servants, including butler, valet and maids) "as her household objected to invidious distinctions between them and the nurse." I replied that I regretted that I had not been consulted upon the matter, as, under such circumstances, I should have declined the case. That I was quite prepared to attend to the patient, the case being urgent, but that, as my needs were few, I hoped she would arrange to have some food sent to me to my room, or the dressing room, on a tray. This was stigmatised as "impertinence," and I was told that the best thing I could do was to return to the Home at once. This I did.

The Superintendent was greatly annoyed, and told me that my conduct was "insubordinate." Later on she told me that she should be compelled to report me to the Committee for impertinence to the lady in question, and that when it was necessary that a rule should be waived, the nurses must obey.

That is my point. Has a committee, or a paid officer, the right, when the whole co-operation is supported by the nurse members' earnings, to override our rules and regulations without consulting individual members? I would add that we have no representation on the committee which governs our Society, and that matters are carried with a very high hand when a nurses' conduct and views are under discussion. It appears to me that we are in a very despicable and helpless position. I feel sure you will think the same.

Yours,

"CO-OPERATION."

[We do; the whole term "co-operation" becomes a snare and a delusion if a society is not managed on co-operative principles, and no society of workers is worthy of the name of "co-operation" where the workers who *pay for its support* are excluded from participation in its government, the position of such members is helpless, and must necessarily become despicable. We have alluded to the principles involved in a trained nurse's position in the private house in our Editorial, "Below the Salt," and we emphatically reply to the questions. (1) No Superintendent of a Nurses Co-operation has a right to waive a rule, without the consent of the member concerned. (2.) The Member refusing to be bound by such a breach of the regulations, made without her consent between the Superintendent and the employer, is *not* guilty of insubordination. We would add, insist upon a degree of self-government in the Society in question. If the *members are loyal to one another* this should be easy, but we all know the power of the "loaves and fishes." No woman worker can be independent unless she is prepared to understand business, and to take her share in the worrying details connected with management. The majority of nurses prefer to be "done for." It saves trouble.—ED.]

THE CASE OF MISS ROGERS, M.R.B.N.A.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I have watched this case with interest, and regret to learn through the Sussex papers that the Local Government Board have advised Miss Rogers to *resign*. It seems to me that not only have the Guardians all through put themselves in the wrong position, but have also failed to shake the statements of Miss Rogers. The chairman of the Nursing Committee admitted that Miss Rogers was a capable nurse and had done her duty, but that there was friction. It is evident that this friction was caused by the Master and Matron refusing to meet Miss Rogers' requirements. I submit Madam that judged from a nursing standpoint these requirements were absolutely justifiable and necessary, and I am surprised that the Local Government Board should have decided to make Miss Rogers the scapegoat for others' neglect. I opine that this decision was arrived at in consequence of the M. O. saying that there was friction and things could not go on as they were, yet this gentleman admitted in cross examination that he only spent half-an-hour twice a week at the workhouse, and had about 90 patients on the books. I wonder Madam, how much he really knows of the matter at all. In the next breath he admitted things were better since Miss Rogers' appointment, that she was a capable nurse and that he had given her a good testimonial. Ah! well, some one must suffer, and Miss Rogers is sacrificed upon the Altar of Bumbledom, and she has the knowledge that she had made it better for her successor. But what about the cost to her, not only does she have to seek a new appointment and bear the incidental costs thereto belonging, I find on enquiry that her solicitor's fee will be some £25 or £30, hence the absolute need of her conferees in the nursing world rallying to her assistance. I trust the subscription list will at once swell to the necessary proportions.

I am yours,

SPECTATOR.

[We shall be very pleased to forward any assistance sent to Miss Rogers, but many readers feel with us that it is the duty of the Royal British Nurses' Association to help its deserving members who are unjustly treated.—ED.]

THE COMING CONGRESS.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I have been deeply interested in all you have told us about the Nurses' Congress at Buffalo, and having a young friend a member of a nurses' society which, I see, is included in the societies invited, may I ask you if it is right for the Committee to decide not to accept the invitation without informing the members that they have been asked to send a delegate? It appears to me it is the nurses who are interested in this matter, and they should at least be told that they have been honoured by an invitation from the American Committee. Somehow nurses are easily suppressed—I suppose because they are so dependent. It seems a pity those who cater for them, no doubt with kind intentions, don't try to make "women" of them.

Yours, H. C.

[This case is not singular; yet, on the other hand, one matron, anxious to interest the nurses in this Congress, could arouse no enthusiasm whatever amongst them. The invitation should be placed before the nurses undoubtedly.—ED.]

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)