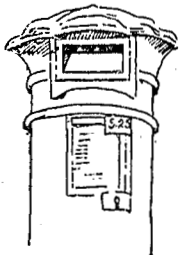


Letters to the Editor.

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 NURSES' CO-OPERATION.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was very pleased to read your outspoken words of warning to the members of the Nurses' Co-operation in your last issue, and it is sincerely to be hoped that the important principle which they embody, will be appreciated by the members.

Here is a society which ten years ago was suggested by and largely founded with the money of a few nurses—from small beginnings the Nurses' Co-operation has now become a very large (there are now 510 members on the staff) and influential Society, and after providing for all office expenses it made a profit last year of £1,108 16s. 11d.

This grand result has been accomplished primarily by the exertions of the members (all women), and the management of the office (all women), in conjunction with a Committee two-thirds of which are women. The Nurses' Co-operation has been a very successful institution—it is to be hoped that this very success is not to be the cause of its downfall.

Sir Henry Burdett's suggestion in his paper of the 16th inst., to hand over the management of this successful women's society to the manipulation of "business men" now that it has been worked up to show a fine profit, is an insult to the present managers, to whom the members owe both gratitude and loyalty, and before they relinquish self-government and independence I would ask: What salaries are these "business men" to be paid for their superfluous services? Because we women know full well that "business" experts do not offer their unsought services for nothing, nor usually, where women are concerned, until by knowledge, energy, and self-help, these same women have made their work *pay*. I am pleased that you have the courage to remind the Nurses' Co-operation Club that the Victoria Commemoration Club for Nurses, founded with such a flourish of trumpets by Sir Henry Burdett, and of which he was a trustee, in some surplus rooms of the *Hospital Building*, in 1897, was a mismanaged miserable failure, and in spite of its "royal" character, fizzled out in 1899, a fact concerning which Sir Henry Burdett has maintained a discreet silence.

Look at the Royal British Nurses' Association since "business men" and not the nurses have been in power. It was in debt for years, until rescued by the "light fantastic toe" of La Belle Otero. All the well-paid posts have been given to untrained women, who know nothing of the justifiable aspirations of educated nurses who are subjected to insolence at the hands of these officials—complaints of which have on more than one occasion been brought to the notice of the Committees, and treated by them either by intimidation or contempt. In this connection I enclose a pamphlet

entitled "Why Nurses should join the Association," written by the paid secretary, Miss G. A. Leigh, in which she writes of "the value of an Association such as *ours*," although she is a lay woman, and has absolutely no right to pose as a trained nurse, and in "advising" trained matrons the following insolent remark appears:—"Tell your young nurse to come and labour with *us*. Let her learn first the beauty of unimportance"!!!

Presumably the only "important" item in this little arrangement is that the "unimportant" young nurses should pay the piper, and provide Miss G. A. Leigh with a handsome salary. Then, again, the management of the Chartered Nurses' Office by another totally untrained woman, Miss Etta Jackson, has been called in question by members upon more than one occasion. But no doubt these persons are found useful in snubbing the "unimportant nurse."

These are practical results from Sir Henry Burdett's tactics in his attempt to manipulate the nursing profession which we nurses cannot afford to ignore, and it is to be hoped that "forewarned will be forearmed" with the Nurses' "Co-op."

ONE WHO HAS SUFFERED.

[We are entirely in sympathy with the deductions of our able correspondent, and have expressed our views in the Editorial. At the request of the Matron of a leading training-school in London, we intend to deal with Miss G. A. Leigh's Pamphlet at an early date.—ED.]

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Your remarks as to the patient's side of the question with regard to the qualities essential in a private nurse are apt. Granted a nurse can make herself pleasant to a medical man and wait upon him with professional efficiency, is this all that is required of her, and all that should be included in the bond when we engage a nurse in time of sickness? I say a thousand times no. I consider that we may claim that the nurse so supplied should be kind and gentle in the way in which she waits upon the patient, and willing to attend to small details which add to her comfort. I hesitate to say she should be sympathetic, because I am inclined to agree with the medical man whom you quote that the gift of sympathy is a very rare one. But at least we expect our nurses to be kind, and how often it happens that the face which is all smiles in the doctor's presence, is sullen, disagreeable, and forbidding as soon as he is gone. I think it must be difficult for heads of training schools to realize how absolutely private patients are at the mercy of the nurse, more especially at night, and what a difference temper makes to their comfort and consequent well-being, otherwise we should not find so many disagreeable women at work as private nurses. I quite agree that the opinion of the patient is a very valuable one as to a nurse's efficiency and suitability. She sees her all day long, while the doctor sees her for, perhaps, half an hour a day at the outside. I think that the opinion of the patient, as well as of the medical attendant, should be asked for by institutions with regard to a nurse, and the patient, or patient's friends, should realise their obligation to give a true one.

I am, dear madam,

Yours truly, C. P. R.

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