

Our Foreign Letter.

SOME REMARKS ABOUT NOSOKOMOS AND THE DUTCH ASSOCIATION FOR SICK NURSING.

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It is a great satisfaction for us to see that "The Nurses' League" (the Dutch Association for Sick Nursing) sets to work earnestly and is exerting its utmost

strength to gain more influence, and that it is beginning to make use of this influence. It is working now with laudable zeal, and branch associations arise speedily in different towns; certainly this fact is calculated to make us rejoice. For there is much for the League to do: the institution of training-schools, the demand for a State diploma for nurses, education for district nurses and extension of district nursing, military hospital reform, etc. This seems certainly an extensive field of action.

No doubt we shall continue to rejoice when we see the League, which has fallen to work so energetically since the establishment of Nosokomos (the "Association for Furthering the Interests of Male and Female Nurses") achieve all this and more.

Alas, until now we see nothing but unmistakable proofs that the League, and also many managers of hospitals, use secretly and in an unworthy way their influence to keep the nurses away from their trades-union, and that they employ all their efforts to make the members resign their membership.

In some cases, of course, they succeed, for the nurses are dependent on the managers and doctors. But can one really expect such proceedings to benefit the character of the League?

Actually some nurses will resign their membership, others will be deterred from joining, but that will only be for a time; respect for the narrow-minded managers, who use their influence in this petty way, cannot fail to diminish in the long run.

It is to be noted, that in the hospitals, where the best conditions obtain, and where the managers and nurses belong to the educated class, several nurses are members of Nosokomos. As a rule this fact is so well established that it may safely be supposed that in a hospital where not one nurse has joined Nosokomos, conditions are really bad, and the moral standard of the assistants is very low indeed.

What is the cause of this enmity on the part of the managers and many doctors? Why do we meet with this petty, narrow way of opposition, by means of slander rendering us suspect.

Why do they not avow openly what they have to say against a trades-union of nurses and hospital-assistants?

We shall try to refute their objections and show

them that Nosokomos has every right to exist, that it can exist by the side of a well directed "Nurses' League," that it can co-operate with the League and support it, as well as it being supported in its turn by the League. The task of Nosokomos, however, is quite a different one from the League's.

For instance, Nosokomos will have to institute a friendly society fund, central address bureaux, co-operative housing, better opportunities for education, even after the curriculum of the training-school, at the same time it will urge better training, shorter hours and better wages.

It is the task of the trades-union Nosokomos to acquaint the League of the pressing needs in the nursing world, of all that pertains to the interests of the nurses, of all the necessary changes and reforms in nursing. It is the League's duty to apply this knowledge in the interests of nursing science, and to execute the desired reforms. For Nosokomos and the League should not only be near akin to each other, but they should complement each other.

Are our boards, and especially our managers, then, so far behind those of other countries?

A glance at the reports of the Buffalo Congress shows us Matrons and nurses in America constantly harping upon "State-Registration," persistently repeating the necessity and expediency of all nurses' joining their professional union.

In the NURSING RECORD, the review edited in England by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, ex-Matron, we see that this talented and sensible lady incessantly urges the mistake of the Nurses' League (the Royal British Nurses' Association) in England being under the control of doctors, and how she never ceases persuading the nurses to take the government of the Association into their own hands. Now, in comparing our conditions with those in England, the question occurs to me, how can it be, that with us not one hospital Matron has ever made an effort to form an independent trades-union of nurses? And why is it, that not one Matron dare avow openly that she thinks such a trades-union useful and necessary? For, no doubt, we have in Holland certainly some Lady Superintendents, who hold this opinion. Then, why do they conceal their sentiments?

We receive a very odd impression from the report on "Nursing in Holland" (by Mrs. La Bastide-Baarslag) written at the request of the editors of the monthly Nursing Review *Maandblad* (the organ of the League) for the Buffalo Congress and reprinted in the NURSING RECORD of October 26th.

In that report a short sketch is given of the growth of sick-nursing in Holland, an account of the present training, and it is mentioned that the new constitution of the Nurses' League contemplates uniformity in the different nurses' diplomas. At the same time it states that, owing to an inquiry instituted by the League in 1898, nine resolutions have been adopted. Not a word, however, is said of the fact that now, in 1901, *i.e.*, three years later, in most hospitals the execution of the said resolutions is still far from being carried out.

Further, Mrs. La Bastide-Baarslag goes on to say that in our country there are three unions: *viz.*, (1) The Dutch Nurses' League, whose intentions are specified; (2) the Wilhelmina Association, whose work and scope is likewise sufficiently explained; (3)

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