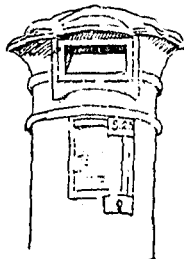


Letters to the Editor.

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.

NURSES' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was glad to notice in your summary of the Session of the International Congress of Nurses on "Nurses' Co-operative Societies" that you point out that such societies exist amongst nurses for other purposes than those of financial gain. It is much that we should co-operate at all for any purpose, and the only sound basis of organization for private nurses is undoubtedly on co-operative lines, but we cannot stop here, or co-operation breeds selfishness, as does all financial success which does not recognize corresponding responsibility. The co-operative system of private nursing has been much criticized, doubtless some of the criticisms are just, but the remedy is not the abolition of the system, but its extension, so that wherever co-operation exists for financial gain, side by side with it there should be co-operation for professional and public purposes. This would tend to minimize the danger of selfishness of which we are so often accused, and from which, as a class, I am afraid we cannot say that we are free. I see that the Registered Nurses' Society is showing the way to this higher form of co-operation, and I hope that many other Societies formed originally on a financial basis only will follow suit. Nothing could be more calculated to raise the standard not only of any particular Society, but of our profession as a whole.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
A BELIEVER IN CO-OPERATION.

A REAL DANGER.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was glad to notice that in your issue last week you drew attention to the danger incurred by travellers by sea at this season of the year by being berthed in cabins with persons suffering from tuberculosis. One has only to travel by one of the great ocean liners to the East to know what an exceedingly small space is considered sufficient, even for first class passengers on these steamers. The French line, the Messageries Maritimes, is ahead of us in this respect, for it only puts two berths in a cabin where English ships have four; but, even so, the space allowed is very small. The result is that if one of the occupants of a cabin is phthisical, that is to say a sufferer from an infectious disease, the air which he expires from his diseased lungs is inspired by his fellow travellers. This is bad—very bad; but when we further consider that travellers to the East at this season are frequently persons whose lungs are in a

delicate condition, who are travelling for their health, and who are peculiarly susceptible to infection, we realize that the carelessness—to use no stronger word—which subjects them to this danger, may bring about the very evil which they are expending money and time to avoid, and that the dangers encountered by the traveller in search of health may be greater than those to which the stay-at-home is subjected. Here is consolation for those who cannot afford foreign travel. Nevertheless, the danger should be remedied.

Yours faithfully,
TRAVELLER.

COTTAGE HELPS OR NURSES?

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM.—Now that we are confronted with a new danger to the status and education of the trained nurse, namely the employment of uneducated women with the veriest smattering of nursing knowledge by Rural Nursing Associations, on the plea that these women are needed to perform the house work of the cottage in which they nurse, and therefore the position is not one which can be undertaken by the fully trained nurse, it may not be ill timed to draw attention to a practice, I can scarcely call it a system, which sprang up through the need for it in connection with a Maternity Home with which I was at one time connected. We (I am speaking of trained nurses holding the L.O.S. diploma) worked in connection with a Central Home, roughly within the radius of a mile from the Institution, and thus constantly came in contact with the same people. Our work was materially lessened, and lightened by the fact that the services of certain handy women of the neighbourhood, who got used to the "nurses' ways" were frequently requisitioned. Thus upon arrival at a case we found the kettle boiling, the clothes needed by mother and child airing at the fire, and various things needed at such times, in readiness, so that one's whole attention could be given to one's own special duties. The same thing happened at subsequent visits. If this woman was informed at what time they were likely to take place, she would have things in readiness, and thus one was able to get through one's work much more quickly than would otherwise be possible. With nursing duties she never attempted to meddle, but she was an admirable "cottage help." Why could not this plan be carried out by Rural District Nursing Associations? No one can suppose that the nursing of acute cases is best performed by a woman who is also responsible for the performance of the house work. And why, after all, all this worry about house work? It is by no means exclusively the mother of the family who is ill, but also the father, and perhaps most frequently the children. Under these circumstances why should not the house-wife do her own work, instead of sitting idle while it is done for her, and leave the nurse free to attend to her own duties?

Yours truly,
A PRACTICAL WOMAN.

[One of the worst features of some Rural Nursing Associations has not been touched upon in the above letter, namely, that "the gentry" who subscribe ten shillings a year to the Association can obtain the services of its nurses for ten shillings a week—just one quarter of the living wage of the private nurse.—Ed.]

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