



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.

AN UNPOPULAR BRANCH OF NURSING.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing"

DEAR MADAM,—May I point out that it is precisely that spirit evinced in the letter signed "Common Sense," in a recent issue, which contributes greatly to the dissatisfaction concerning private nursing, and which takes practical form in the tendency of a certain portion of the public to take all the private nurse can give, and a reluctance to give anything beyond actual fees in return. This system applied to private nursing will never work satisfactorily, nor has it ever done so when applied to any workers who temporarily become members of a household. A nurse has, generally, to submit to many uncongenial conditions in a patient's home, and to do much for him and his for which money cannot pay, and she does this so cheerfully and ungrudgingly that I think some people fail to see the unselfish effort of her attitude. It is equally necessary that the family should also endeavour to sink their idiosyncrasies for the time being.

A practical application of the golden rule on both sides would do much to promote harmony in place of the strained relations deplored. There are many people who will not allow the serious illness of one near and dear to them to alter or in any way interfere with the routine of their daily life, of which self is the pivot. Such make life very difficult for all women workers who, as nurses, governesses, or servants, may come under their roof. On the other hand, there are many, when illness, with all its tiresome disorganisation, falls on their household, who, by their sweet unselfishness and consideration for the feelings of others, stimulate the nurse and everyone in the house to respond in a similar manner, and comfort and mutual respect are the result, even when the nurse and the family are not, socially speaking, congenial to each other.

Few houses are built, or rooms arranged, with a view to the inevitable illness which comes sooner or later to every home, and this is the chief reason a nurse is felt to be "an incubus": there are no rooms for her use. That being so, unless the family are willing to give up one of their own rooms to the nurse, the two alternatives are to receive her pleasantly as a professional visitor to the house, or to pay the additional guinea a week which will enable her to meet the expenses of living away from the case when not on duty. But should this latter practice become general, I think it unlikely that the private nurse's working day would continue to be sixteen, or even twelve, hours.

Viewed from "Common Sense's" standpoint, personally I cannot see any real difficulty in the matter. It is solely a question of the family bearing a part of the unavoidable trouble and inconvenience caused by illness, the remainder falling on the patient,

nurse, and servants. That many members of the public similarly regard the subject I have had ample practical proof.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully
MÉNA BELBY.

TAINED AND FERMENTED MILK.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—Allow me to relate some of my experiences in connection with the milk traffic. They may prove interesting to your readers as well as of useful public interest. For nineteen years I have studiously and actively connected myself with that occupation, and I can fearlessly state that I did my level best to act rightly and steer as fair a course as possible in connection with the curious, peculiar, passing phases and surroundings I had become involved in, in connection with the pursuit; that almost single-handed I had—in my sphere of operations—largely to carry on. Milk is, however, a very troublesome commodity to control, when it has to pass from a numerous variety of sources, far and near, and through many hands during its travels, in large quantities, from the cow to the consumer; while serious troubles in connection with it arise even previous to, as well as after, its birth. I dropped into a system of supply before the dawn of bacteriological science had fully spread its rays of light, and before the advent of the mechanical separator had sprung into such current active existence as a disturbing agency in the treatment and handling of milk. A period of revolution had practically then begun, supplies of town-produced milk were ceasing, and milk from the country being substituted; while another era of "reform, system and reorganisation" has now become an absolute necessity as a consequence of the mistaken practices that have been pursued in connection with country supplies, because of insufficient adaptation to the teaching of correct methods; for unconsidered incorrect methods have been continued, and gone on with, from bad to worse, through thoughtless lack of observation and insufficient educational study, as well as full and proper consideration, of the evils that have been apathetically ignored, overlooked, and largely allowed to develop, into a kind of malignant growth, in connection with supplies of country milk for fluid consumption in our large towns.

I have experienced and know of the danger of even one or more supplies of milk being sent into a first-class dairying institution managed by competent persons and expert trained hands, ruining the whole supply through incorrect production and handling of the milk at the farms, and the cream consequently developing the injurious and disagreeable flavours bred and born into the milk, as well as also the butter made therefrom; while experimental attempts to use (carelessly-produced) milk for cheese-making resulted in that commodity ripening into a most foul mouthful of food, that had then become practically unsaleable, in consequence of the milk not being properly produced, or immediately purified by quick and proper aëration after its birth. From the same cause I have known and experienced butter made at the dairy of a large landed proprietor from the milk of Jersey cows (that were also improperly fed) to become quickly absolutely uneatable, and I have known of tainting milk sent up to a London dairyman to have been returned by all his customers, and his business placed

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