



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.

PAYING PATIENTS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I should like to be allowed to say that I do not think the suggestion made in your last number would in any satisfactory manner meet the difficulty of persons who can, and ought to, pay. Their resort to free public institutions ought to be discouraged, but the further doing away of the "pauper taint" by altering the name would, on the contrary, encourage many more to enter, though I have long urged that the term "Workhouse" is now absolutely unsuited to both the workhouse and infirmary, and that "Poorhouse" should be substituted for it. Recent articles in the *Nineteenth Century* magazine have shown the systems adopted in many foreign countries for those classes who can pay varying sums for maintenance in old age, for whom we do nothing, at least for men, and as at present wider schemes, such as those I have alluded to, are hopeless, the only remedy is (as I have urged for some years) to start a home for men, for payments varying from £150 a year to 5s. weekly, and such institutions, when once started, would, it is believed, be self-supporting, as several similar homes for women are already.

Why such have not yet been added to the ever-growing list of philanthropic work has long been a surprise to me, and the sooner this missing link in our chain is adopted the better it will be for large classes of sufferers who are willing to pay even 15s. weekly (as some are now doing) in our infirmaries, intended only for "paupers" or the destitute.

Yours faithfully,

LOUISA TWINING.

October 11th.

P.S.—The substitution of independent names for infirmaries would, I am sure, be most misleading.

WOMEN COLONISTS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—It is to be hoped that "V. C.'s" timely "Don'ts" will have the desired effect, and warn highly-trained nurses that unless they are prepared to turn a hand to any sort of domestic work they had much better stay at home, where their highly-skilled services are greatly in request in hospitals, Poor Law infirmaries, districts, and private houses. Splendid as is the work done by our trained nurses in this highly-organised land, where people will have comfort and luxury, they are not, as a class, very adaptable, and they have a rooted objection to "menial work." Now, it is just what is misnamed menial work in this country which is the most necessary work in a colony. Specialists are only required in South Africa in limited numbers; what are wanted are "all-round" women. It cannot be too clearly recognised that the colonies do not want women who are useless at home.

Mrs. Fawcett, who has had close experience of South African life, gave her testimony, at a meeting of the South African Extension Committee last March, to the admirable way in which colonial ladies do their own housework. Speaking of the future she said:—"We want women who go out to be able to cook, to sew, to wash, to clean, and to have some definite pursuit at their fingers' ends to make the house beautiful and happy, women who can doctor and nurse, women who can raise fruit and flowers and similar produce"; and Mr. Asquith, who supported her, "strongly emphasised the importance of selection and preparation of the women who go out."

That there is bitter disappointment and heart-burning in store for those who have too carefully specialised their life's work here, and intend to continue on the same limited lines in South Africa, I feel sure; and unless they have appointments open to them, or well-to-do friends to go to, it would be wise to wait awhile. I notice in this morning's paper that "cabbages and cauliflowers are now costing from 2s. 6d. to 15s. each at Pretoria"; that gives some idea of the cost of living at present, and washing, clothing, and everything else are on the same impossible scale.

Yours truly,

AN AFRIKANDER.

NURSING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The question of nursing in South Africa is one of considerable interest now the war is over. There will be only a comparatively small number of general hospitals left in the country, and possibly not more than 160 Army Nursing Reserve Sisters. Many of the Sisters, as the hospital staffs have been disbanded, have gone to Johannesburg with a view to private nursing, joining the Nursing Co-operative Society, instead of returning to England. Already there are so many nurses in that town that it is difficult to find work for all.

A well-known man in the mining world, when talking about nursing in South Africa, said he could not understand why so many Sisters were remaining in the country, for there were far more nurses in Johannesburg than could find work before the war began—people have no time to be ill; there was far too much work if a living was to be made; that until the country is more settled the nursing outlook is not too promising; it would be wise for those contemplating emigration to have a definite appointment in view and go further up country or to the outlying districts, for Johannesburg and Pretoria have large hospitals beautifully equipped with accommodation for paying patients.

I should strongly advise every nurse going out to South Africa to accustom herself as far as possible to housekeeping and domestic work, for there are very few white servants, and the natives are not to be depended upon. A nurse who was doing private work in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony before the war said that upon more than one occasion the native servants vanished during the night, leaving her with the family and household to look after, as well as the patient.

The tempting fees of five guineas a week are not general—a fair average is from two to three. At present there is great scarcity of accommodation, for board and lodging; everything is very expensive—

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