



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.

BLOODLESS SURGERY AND BEARDS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The papers have largely advertised the manipulative treatment of Dr. Lorenz and his demonstrations of bloodless surgery in the management of dislocations. This is nothing more nor less than old-fashioned "bone-setting," by which many "quacks" with the ideal surgical fingers have treated and cured hundreds of cases for a generation past. But it was not to discuss treatment I ventured to address you, but to express an opinion that it is well that Dr. Lorenz does not adopt the system of "open operations," to judge from the numerous portraits which have appeared in the Press. He is depicted with an enormously long, wide, flowing beard. How is it possible to sterilise this hirsute appendage? Surely, with all the fuss about the sterilisation of trained nurses, dressings, instruments, &c., it is a farce if the operator is permitted to wear a beard—that is, unless he is prepared to tie it up in a sterilised bag. When shall we leave off straining at gnats and swallowing camels? One sees the barrister clean-shaven—for no valid purpose—and the surgeon holding nurses responsible for the failure of asepticism in the wards, when he himself wears a beard in which all the birds of the air might comfortably build their nests and deposit their young, to say nothing of the *genus* microbe.

Yours truly,
COMMON SENSE.

SEPTIC TANKS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—What a difference it makes in dieting patients to find oneself minus the succulent oyster, for since the Southampton scare it is no wonder patients are diffident in partaking of the same. One wonders that sanitary bodies have allowed this danger of contracting enteric from shell-fish to menace the community so long when its prevention is simple. Surely it is time all sewage was treated by the "septic tank" method, which is one of the most practical developments of modern bacteriology. This is what happens: the excreta of the enteric patient contain living bacilli in myriads uncountable. These bacilli, owing largely to neglect of efficient disinfection in the sick-room, pass into the sea still alive, are absorbed by the oyster, and kindly returned by it to the invalid and epicure, still alive O! in spite of their travels. If compelled to submit to the "septic-tank" method, the sewage, of which the essential portion is the bacteria it contains, is handed over to the tender mercies of other bacteria harmless to man, but the sure destroyers of sewage germs. When the battle is over conquerors and conquered are deported to the sea, and if they do enter shell-fish no one knows or cares. It is a variant of the old saw, "Set a thief to

catch a thief"—and then, one might add, hang them both!

PRIVATE NURSE.

REGISTRATION BOUND TO COME.

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

DEAR MADAM,—May I suggest to your correspondent "Sister Alice" that the "steady, experienced, uncertificated nurses," whose champion she is, should, for one year, study each week the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING. I feel convinced that all the intelligent women amongst them would then fully realise their limitations and the enormous audacity of assuming the position of a trained nurse without first having had a three years' training. To "make out a report, take pulse, temperature, and respiration" constitutes only a fraction of what is comprehended in skilled nursing. And as for being "able to carry out the doctor's orders," there is all the difference in the world between the untrained woman's interpretation and execution of these and that of the nurse who has been thoroughly grounded in the principles of nursing.

I have seen much of home nursing, and I am certain that, except in slight ailments, life-long injury to health is often caused through the ignorance of the untrained nurse, even though she may be a devoted and intelligent woman. To my mind, it is quite as unwarrantable for a woman to undertake the nursing of serious cases of illness, without having previously received her full training in a hospital, as it would be for any unqualified man to attempt to prescribe for the cases.

Nursing, as I understand it, and as it is set forth in all good nursing journals, is *not* a domestic occupation; still less is it a trade. It is a skilled profession, and those who would practise it honestly must acquire the necessary knowledge by systematic training and study. Registration for nurses is bound to come, sooner or later. It is an inevitable sequence in the evolution of the profession.

With my earnest good wishes for the success of your untiring effort to obtain this,

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
MÉNA BELLBY.

THE ORDER OF THE ROYAL RED CROSS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—You have referred to the very strong feeling of disappointment upon the part of the large body of trained nurses who have spent two or three years working hard in South Africa nursing sick and wounded soldiers that so few of them have been selected for honours, whilst Society women who took an enjoyable trip of a few months to the Cape, or otherwise busied themselves about nursing affairs, have received a little shower of Royal Red Crosses. It would be interesting to know if it was *de rigueur* to wear this Order at the fancy dress dance recently given by the Countess Howe at Gopsall, and commented on in last week's *Onlooker*, which states: "There will be a craze this coming season for fancy dress dinners and dances. The ball was set rolling at Gopsall, where many of the women dressed as men, and Mrs. George Cornwallis West had a wonderful success as a Spanish cavalier, in doublet and hose, with fiercely up-twisted moustaches and wide sombrero hat. Another success was Lady Sarah Wilson as Bonnie Prince Charlie in a kilt; Lady Howe was Joan of Arc."

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