



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.

IS IT PRIVILEGED?

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

DEAR MADAM,—Our local Press has expatiated at great length on the St. Luke's Hospital controversy. Naturally such a scandal has made fine press pie. But what some of us citizens want to know is—Is such a letter as that written by Miss Smithers, the Night Superintendent, to the Board of Guardians—which letter contained grave imputations on the moral characters of the Chairman and Matron of the hospital, of which imputations the Special Committee reported that "there is no foundation . . . and that any suggestion of the kind is cruel and unjustifiable"—a privileged communication? That any person accusing others of immoral relations, thus attempting to blast the reputations and ruin the professional positions of public officials, should be permitted to do so without redress is an outrage if unpunishable. Surely the Matron, Miss Frost, has some redress. She has been exonerated by the Special Committee and the Board of Guardians, and yet called upon to resign by them, and thus cruelly punished. What professional future has this innocent lady before her? Where will she obtain such a position as that of which she has been deprived, after all her hard and devoted services to the institution, of which there was ample evidence forthcoming at the Guardians' meeting? This is the second excellent Matron who has severed her connection with St. Luke's Hospital of recent years owing to conditions which she considered intolerable. What sort of a woman is going to succeed them? Surely not the best type of hospital superintendent! Such women will think twice before they entrust their good name and moral character to the tender mercies of the Halifax Board of Guardians, after their failure to protect officials they declare innocent of the most cruel and injurious accusations.

Again, take the case of the Chairman (Mr. Tillotson), whose enthusiasm for the care of the sick in the infirmary, and the progress and well-being of the nurses, has resulted in inspiring immense improvements since the institution was opened. What man worth his salt is going to devote himself to such necessary public work if he is to be insulted for taking an enthusiastic interest in his duty? The whole affair is enough to disgust decent-minded people, and, if allowed to rest where it is, cannot but injure the whole work of the hospital.

Yours truly,
A DISGUSTED CITIZEN.

CO-OPERATIVE TRAINING.

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

DEAR MADAM,—In relation to Mr. Douglas Bryan's letter in your columns on Nursing Organisation, I am

glad to observe that he considers that any scheme of legislation for nurses "must be broad enough to take in all possible places of training, and not the now recognised training-schools alone." There is in many hospitals at present valuable training-ground which is not being utilised to advantage simply because as such hospitals do not afford a general training they are not recognised as educational agencies. But if they were brought into line, as they would be if we had a central nursing authority recognising a certificate given after a full course of training in affiliated groups of hospitals, these institutions would take their proper place, and this would be not one of the least benefits conferred by Registration. At present the organisation of nursing on efficient lines is very disheartening to a Matron in a special hospital. While realising that most valuable experience is to be obtained in the care of certain diseases, she cannot conscientiously hold out hope of an adequate training in nursing. Consequently, women who would be most promising probationers go to general hospitals, and certificated nurses have not yet, to any appreciable extent, realised the value of special post-graduate courses. The result is that the nursing staff of a special hospital is largely composed of pupils in training in one branch only, and the Matron considers, with what equanimity she may, the following problems—(1) How the standard of nursing in a special hospital can be brought up to that in a general one with the material at her disposal; and (2) how it is possible to avoid launching into the nursing world women who have had no general experience, to swell the ranks of the partially-trained, for, of course, no compulsion can be brought to bear on the probationers in special hospitals to pass on for further training to a general hospital. The only remedy I can see for this undesirable condition of things is through the good offices of such a Central Board as would be called into existence on the passage of a Nurses' Registration Act; therefore this aspect of the case alone would make me what I already am,

A WARM SUPPORTER OF THE REGISTRATION
MOVEMENT.

NURSES AND THRIFT.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Your perfectly legitimate application of the closure to the rousing debate which, by your kind permission, has been going forward in your journal may have, I am afraid, one ill-effect on the cause which some of us have been doing our best to support—viz., the integrity of the Fund which we trust with our savings, and which we therefore have a strong interest in not hearing depreciated.

Although, by your pronouncement at the end of your notes, you make it clear that you disapprove, as Editor, of the methods of warfare pursued by your more aggressive and elusive correspondents (thereby scoring an important point to our side), yet one part of your summing-up may leave a disagreeable and, as I venture to believe, inaccurate impression upon many of your readers. This is the passage where you allude to the complaint sent to you some three years ago by a nurse who believed herself robbed by Sir Henry Burdett of £6 3s. 9d.

But, Madam, is there anything in the rather out-of-date correspondence of this particular nurse to show that she had any more justification than the rest for

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