



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.

RAGGING BY NURSES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I notice in the press a chorus of condemnation of the nurses at the Tooting Bec Asylum who have been dismissed for their cruel and cowardly assault upon a junior nurse, but the press does not appear to have carried the incident to its logical conclusions.

1. Where are those nurses now?

In all probability they have obtained fresh posts, and are engaged in nursing the sick and helpless. Is it credible that women who have proved themselves so devoid of the essential qualities which go to make a nurse can be reliable and trustworthy attendants on the sick? Would the gentlemen of the press like to be nursed themselves, when ill and helpless, by these women? If not, let them consider another question:

2. How is it possible to prevent them?

Only by the establishment, by the authority of the State, of a Central Governing Body to deal with the Registration, Education, and Discipline of the nursing profession as a whole. Until such time as this is done, nurses dismissed from one institution for any offence whatsoever can, and do, obtain employment in another. If the press think that it is essential for the standard in our profession to be kept at a high level, let them come forward and support our demand for State Registration. The support so far has been of a very lukewarm nature. Perhaps this latest exhibition will teach them the desirability, in their own interest, of State Registration.

Yours faithfully,

REGISTRATIONIST.

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

DEAR MADAM,—It is with great regret that I have read of the conduct of the nurses who were recently dismissed at the Tooting Bec Asylum, because, owing to the widespread publicity given to the circumstances of the case in the press, it is calculated to injure the whole body of nurses in the public estimation. But another aspect of the case also presents itself. Nurses claim to be members of an honourable profession. We cannot, I fear, in our present disorganised condition justly lay claim to be professional workers. We cannot always even claim to act honourably. I cannot help thinking that some of the lack of honourable conduct on the part of nurses must be laid at the door of Matrons of training-schools. Through these schools pass year by year those who will hold the honour of nursing in the future in their hands. They are for three whole years under the direct influence of the Matrons. What is the result of this influence? Does it inspire the pupils of the school with high professional ideals? In most instances decidedly no. The promotion of self-interest, subserviency where expedient; tyranny to subordinates,

are too often the object-lessons which nurses receive. And as to definite instruction in the ethics of their calling, does one Matron in a hundred consider it her duty to give any to the pupils who look to her for guidance and training? Can we wonder at failure in the rank-and-file, when those who should be in deed as well as in name the "heads of the profession" fall so short of professional standards?

Yours faithfully,

LOOKER-ON.

SHOULD NURSING HOMES BE INSPECTED?

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

DEAR MADAM,—I think those who have worked in Nursing Homes will all agree that inspection would stimulate proprietors to improvement. But the inspection must be compulsory, thorough, and unprejudiced. I gather from the clauses in the R.B.N.A. Draft Bill that all three of these necessities would be neglected.

First, inspection by that Bill is made voluntary, which is worse than useless, because the proprietors of Homes who would invite inspection and registration would be those which are well conducted and do not need inspection.

Secondly and thirdly, no inspection can be thorough and unprejudiced which is not conducted by a body, or Government Department, on which the proprietors of Homes have no representation or interest.

I am strongly of opinion that, to be effective, the inspection and registration of Nursing Homes should be provided for in a separate Bill from that dealing with the Registration of Trained Nurses. As Miss Helen Todd writes in your issue of the 13th ult.:—"The two are as totally distinct as the registration of medical practitioners and lunatic asylums."

Also, it is most unjust that we nurses—a poorly-paid class of women workers—should be compelled to pay for carrying out legislation which is of benefit to the community generally. Dr. Biernacki's suggestion that the registration of Nursing Homes should be provided for in a separate Bill is the right course for the R.B.N.A. to take. Why should they not drop the first part of the Bill dealing with the registration of nurses—work being much more effectively dealt with by the Society formed for that purpose—and bring in another Bill providing only for the registration of Nursing Homes? By this course the Association would be doing useful work; now they are only injuring the nurses' cause and confusing public opinion by, as you describe their action, "cutting across our bows."

Yours truly,

LOCAL HON. SEC., SOCIETY FOR STATE
REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

THE WEAKEST LINK.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Miss Mary Burr well pointed out, in connection with the training of nurses in Switzerland, that the "strength of the strongest chain is that of its weakest link." This is an acknowledged truth. Then, how about the effectiveness of the nursing service in this country? We plume ourselves upon the high standard of efficiency to which we have attained, and point with pride to our well-organised training-schools, saying, in effect, "See how perfect we are. What other European country can compare

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