



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.

THE DECLINE OF POPULARITY.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The tone of our Nurse-Training Schools must have altered considerably in the last few years if all Matrons are considered "Ogres." Certainly no one would agree with "One of the Ogres" who was present on Saturday at the Annual Meeting of the Bart's League, when the Matron, Miss Stewart, submitted herself for re-election as President of the League. She received a splendid ovation upon her re-election from the members present, and well she deserved it, after the courageous manner in which she has come forward to fight the battles of the nursing world as a whole during the past year, both before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on State Registration and before the Board of Trade in opposition to the most dangerous scheme emanating from the officials of Guy's Hospital, in their attempt to "gobble up" the nursing profession. Even nurses, who are proverbially an apathetic class of women, are very sensible of moral courage in a Matron. This also was made quite clear at the Bart's League Meeting in the various discussions.—I am, dear Madam, yours,

A MEMBER OF THE BART'S LEAGUE.

RURAL DISTRICT NURSING.

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

DEAR MADAM,—While thoroughly agreeing with "Late District Nurse" on the desirability of employing none but fully-trained nurses for the sick poor, I take exception to her sweeping assertion that "fine ladies" and "county magnates" provide the cottage nurse "because they think anything is good enough for the poor." If this is true, how is it that they take the trouble to provide them with nurses at all. Attending committees and collecting subscriptions is not such delightful work after all, and there are far more rapid and effective methods of self-advertisement and self-glorification to be found if that is the object desired. I am fully convinced that it is not from want of heart, but from want of knowledge, that the upper classes go in so much for cottage nurses.

Lay members of the public (to whatever class they belong) who do not happen to have come in contact with members of the nursing profession or hospital authorities, have extraordinarily vague notions as to the conditions of hospital life, and as to what constitutes a proper hospital training. The consequence is, many of these people really imagine that the art of nursing can be acquired in three or four months, and believing as they do, that a good nurse and a good charwoman can be found in the person of a cottage nurse, is it any wonder that they give her the preference over the fully-trained nurse whom they consider to be a very one-sided person? "Late District Nurse" says

the upper classes would not think of employing these cottage nurses for themselves. It is probably true that they would not care to use the same class of woman, but I know they would not at all object to the same class of nurse. I personally have come across two cases where rich patients have been provided from nursing homes with six months' trained nurses, and, knowing this, they have cheerfully paid two or more guineas a week for them, totally unaware that they had any reason to complain.

State Registration of nurses will do away with this kind of ignorance; the ventilation of the subject has already done much to enlighten the public as to the difference between the demi-semi-trained and the fully-trained.—Yours,

ANOTHER DISTRICT NURSE.

AN INTERESTING SUGGESTION.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I wonder if you could find space for a new departure in your admirable Journal, which I believe would interest and be useful to many readers. Could a column be given occasionally to those correspondents who, having read something of value, might send in paragraphs for publication. For instance, this week I have been reading with vast interest "Napoleon: The First Phase." It is full of things one would like to remember and also to know that others had read. We learn that the Academy of Lyons offered a prize in 1791 for the best essay on the subject: "What truths and what sentiments is it most important to impress upon men for their happiness?" Napoleon, then twenty-two years of age, competed for this prize, and although he did not get it—the quotations from his essays are pregnant with genius—what he says in the praise of liberty, which he seems to regard as the product of reason and logic, has surely been deeply impressed upon the nurses of all nations when comparing the progress of professional organisation in Europe and the United States. He writes:—"Without liberty there is no energy, no virtue, no strength in nations; without energy, without virtue, without strength, there is no sentiment, no natural reason, there is no happiness. All tyrants will doubtless go to hell; but their slaves will go there also, for after the crime of oppressing a nation, the crime of suffering oppression is the most monstrous. Let these principles be incessantly repeated to men. To resist oppression is their fairest right, that which tyrants fear most, and they have always been afraid of it." Bonaparte's essay offers a psychological study of the most interesting character. How little did he know what was hidden in the depths of his own nature!

Yours sincerely,

E. S. M.

[We will gladly give space for the publication of such paragraphs as strike thoughtful readers as worthy of repetition, hoping at the same time that they will preface such paragraphs with their own sentiments in reference to them. Some of our correspondents have accused nurses as a class of only reading "trash"; if this is true, the suggestion of "E. S. M." will bear but little fruit. But we know of many nurses who love books, and find one of their keenest delights in literature. We can imagine Miss Mollett giving us some "Idle Thoughts" on desultory reading of great interest.—ED.]

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