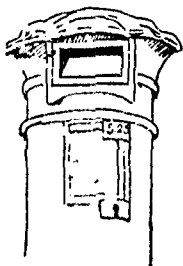


Letters to the Editor.

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.

RECOLLECTIONS: 1899 AND 1900.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I read "E. R.'s" delightful papers with much interest, and could only have wished that she had laid a little more stress on the terribly inadequate sanitary system at Bloemfontein during the war—but perhaps, as she fell a victim to it, it is a subject she does not care to refer to.

Recently I heard Dr. H. E. Leigh Canney give an address on "The Toleration of Enteric Fever by the Army," in which he said: "The condition of the British Army at Bloemfontein was precisely similar, from the point of view of sanitary organisation, to that of the Royalist and Parliamentary armies close to Reading in 1642, when, according to one historian, both sides could not fight, although close to each other; either side left off and fought not the enemy, but with disease."

To meet the needs of the Army the speaker recommended the creation of "water sections" and "pioneer sections" in every regiment and unit, the former having no other duties whatever.

It is said that it is impossible to make "Tommy" realise the dangers of water. If thirsty, drink he will—whatever comes along. How different to the splendidly disciplined little "Japs" during their war. A good military nursing system is, of course, valuable in the extreme, but without a better sanitary system in the Army Medical Department thousands of lives are bound to be lost in war.

"ANOTHER RESERVE."

A POINT OF NURSING ETIQUETTE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The letter of "An Ex-Colonial" raises an interesting point, and in theory I agree with her entirely, but, as a private nurse, I have come to learn that hard and fast rules on any matter whatsoever have at times to be discarded. One must be guided by circumstances to a great extent. This brings me to a point not always sufficiently recognised, that tact and *savoir faire* are most essential to the success of a private nurse, and should be cultivated by all nurses. With them one does not go very far wrong; indeed, they are so important that women very incompetent professionally pass muster because they possess them. Without them the very best of nurses may fail to succeed in private work.

In regard to leaving doctor and patient alone, I should like to point out that this question cannot present itself for solution very often. Doctors are

busy men, pay their professional visits and hurry off. It is inconceivable that they can often have time to spare for gossip pure and simple.

So long as the doctor is paying a professional visit, the nurse unquestionably should remain in professional attendance. If he intimates such attendance is no longer requisite, she should retire, remaining within easy call. If the patient desires to be left alone with the doctor, she will generally intimate this to the nurse before his visit, in which case it will be quite easy to inform the doctor of her desire on his arrival and ascertain his wishes.

Practically, in the course of a considerable experience of private nursing I have not found any difficulty arising from a matter of this kind. Sometimes I wish a doctor would pay a little more attention to the amenities. A bustling "Good morning, how are you? Oh, much better to-day! You'll soon be all right, good day!" kind of visit is apt to leave the patient a little "short" with the nurse subsequently. (It may not be justice, but it is human nature.) Patients do love to describe their symptoms at length, and feel infinitely better and at peace with the world after having done so.

Yours faithfully,

AN OLD STAGER.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.—TWO NOTABLE BOOKS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—A letter on books may at first seem rather unusual in our professional journal, but a discussion on "Christmas Presents" has been recently carried on in your columns, and it is only a short step from the consideration of their advisability to that of their substance. Although we are all agreed that they are undesirable in institutional life (I speak specially of presents made to persons in authority by those under their control), still we all of us, whether Matrons or probationers, have friends and relations whom we take a special pleasure in remembering at this season of the year, and some of your readers may be glad to have their attention drawn to two books of more than passing interest, and which tend to give us new aspects of old questions and a larger view of life generally.

The books in question are "The Life of Charles Lamb," by Lucas (two vols., 2ls.), and "The Upton Letters, by T. B." (7s. 6d.).

All lovers of Charles Lamb and his sister will welcome with delight Mr. Lucas's volumes. Not only does he gather in one book all that Ainger, Talfourd, and Lamb's other biographers have told us, but there is also much new and interesting matter in the shape of letters and other material, such as Crabb Robinson's Diary.

The illustrations are especially noteworthy, including both reproductions of portraits of Lamb, his friends and contemporaries (Leigh Hunt, Wordsworth, Coleridge, &c.), and prints of Christ's Hospital and other parts of London, as they existed in Lamb's time.

The index alone, the work of Miss M. Jackson, is worthy of notice as giving a most valuable chronological table of Lamb's life.

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