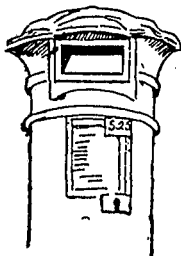


Letters to the Editor.

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.

OUR GUINEA PRIZE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I beg to thank you for the cheque which I received this morning.

I was very pleased to be the lucky winner of "The Prize Puzzles" for January.

I am, Madam,

Yours faithfully,

NELLIE HAYES.

Borough Hospital, Myland, Colchester.
February 3rd, 1907.

THE PLAGUE OF POPULARITY.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Reading your news columns the other day and noting your remarks anent the lay nursing press I fell into musings marked with large interrogation points, the which remain still and perhaps for ever unanswered. Why, oh, why (mused I), are we so popular, so sought after? Why have we this plague of popularity? Why are we afflicted with the love-making of the lay press? Why are we the continual object of tender attentions of philanthropists, non-professional journalists, kind, but interfering persons of all sorts? In short, why are we so interesting?

I do not see other working women being plagued as we are with popularity. Who gets up pensions for teachers, for instance, in the primary grades? Who (outside of their trade) publishes journals for the sole good of stenographers? Who yearns to be the adviser and counsellor of artists? Who feels called upon to be the altruistic leader of women gardeners and bee-raisers? These people would think it ridiculous if we, for instance, established with loud trumpeting journals on their own lines and of which we knew nothing, for their benefit and their great good. But they are not popular and we are—(incidentally we seem also to be profitable).

Behold how M.D.'s who have not set the river of medicine afire find glory, great attention, and a living by going in for nursing! Behold how the laity whose gifts do not seem to be appreciated in their own humble sphere rise into sparkling prominence and gratifying financial security as soon as they realise that nursing alone is interesting, nurses only are worth while, nursing affairs are the really essential things—this, this is the procession they will walk in.

Honestly it "wonders me," as the Germans say,

that so many people of various kinds are evidently able to make a good living out of the fleece that they shear from (lamb) nurses. That there is a good living to be thus made is proved by the numbers who are exploiting this lucrative field. And, again, my queries arise in a different form. What lay journals do we see making a living out of physicians, or out of dentists, or out of dressmakers, and WHY is it evidently so easy to make a living out of nurses? I really wish someone would answer this question.

It is bad for us to be so popular. It is bad to be exposed to the sweet wheedling of the lay press. It makes one vain. I have myself encountered this sugary trap. "You, who are so clever, so interesting—who belong to so great and glorious a nation"—these tempting baits are hard to resist. One is so convinced of their truth, and it is so eminently fitting that it should be recognised by the world at large.

"Get thee behind me, Satan."

We may be sure that the lay press would take very little interest in our affairs unless there was a good financial field to be worked; that M.D.'s would practise medicine and let nursing alone if it was not lucrative; that philanthropists, and Kind Persons generally, would not even know we were there if there was "nothing in it" for themselves. What silly geese we are, to be sure. If we kept for our own uses the ducats we now lavish on lay exploiters of all kinds, what could we not do? We could have in each country an International Clubhouse and centre. We could maintain there our own representative, and stock a library; carry on a bureau for the transaction of all kinds of details useful to nurses; maintain an information desk, have a place for general meetings, a headquarters for our national organisations. But no! We are Popular.

L. L. Dock.

A SORROWFUL TALE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I think, with the best intentions in the world, Sister "Z" has thoroughly misunderstood the trend of my book. I was asked the other day *why* I had omitted to mention the nurses and smart ladies, and my reply was, they did not concern me! I wrote, and I am responsible for nobody else's experiences except my own, and I think if Sister "Z" will again favour me by reading my book "right side up" she will see I shall do the nurses no "harm!" Only bad conduct "harms" us, and it was that, and not the out-of-dateness of the R.A.M.C. that brought so many of the nurses in disrepute. It is as well to have no confusion of thought on this matter, as out-of-dateness brought the R.A.M.C. into disrepute, and bad and foolish conduct brought some of the nurses, and to mix the two up is want of logic! That for some Matrons to think it a "distinct disadvantage" to have nursed in the war, brings it again under the same category—want of logic and fair-mindedness. The real "sorrowful tale" is to have committed the misdeeds, not the exposing of them. We are all too apt to lay emphasis on exposure, and not sufficient on the action itself.—Yours truly,

SISTER "X."

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