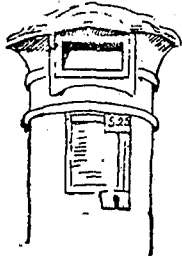


## Letters to the Editor.

NOTES, QUERIES, &amp;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.*

## A NURSES' DEFENCE UNION.

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

DEAR MADAM,—As the interests of nurses are often imperilled in exactly the same way as those of doctors, it seems strange that a Nurses' Defence Union is not an actuality, instead of merely prospective.

I think if we were less spiritless and apathetic concerning our own interests, it might have been so.

In her Paper read before the Matrons' Council on the 22nd ultimo, Miss H. L. Pearse pointed out, that the two societies for the protection of medical men, viz., the Medical Defence Union and the London and Counties Medical Protection Society, had been productive of much good. This ought to be an incentive to nurses to follow their initiative, and form a Society of their own. That there is a very urgent need for a protection society in our profession, I think few will deny. I wonder how many nurses know that a probationer has no legal protection whatever! It is not until she obtains her certificate that she ranks with domestic servants, and can, therefore, claim a month's notice.

After the discussion which took place at the last meeting of the Matrons' Council, at which I was present, concerning the necessity for a Nurses' Defence Union, I feel that the initial step has been taken of this most necessary measure.

Of course, the first thing to be done is to get the opinion of the nurses—to feel the professional pulse, so to speak—so, as I have been asked to act as Hon. Secretary in the initial stages of this movement, I would suggest that all readers of the Journal who are in sympathy with the scheme, should send in their names—and their opinions—to me, at 431, Oxford Street, London, W.; in order that I may have a report to present to the Matrons' Council when it meets to discuss the question, before calling a public meeting. The prompt action of the Kingston Infirmity Nurses' League is very encouraging. Now arises the obvious question of £ s. d. Every nurse who is in sympathy with the measure, will naturally realise the necessity of adequate endowment if it is to become a strong and reliable Society. A yearly subscription of 10s. would probably be necessary to achieve this. Have not many nurses lost far more than that by dishonest people who refuse to pay them?

"I have a tale to tell" of that sort. On two

occasions I was not paid at all, not to mention being robbed by my patient!

Viewed in this light, nurses should not think 10s too big a price to pay for protection.

Is there not also a certain measure of morality involved in the question? Should not the members of the highest calling for women, regard it as a duty to take a share in the defence of any of its co-members?

If one studies the history of the old social and mediæval guilds, one sees what a power for good they were both socially and industrially.

The social guilds were instituted for good fellowship and community in charitable works. The industrial guilds were instituted for keeping up the standard of any industry, i.e., its efficiency and usefulness, and—mark this—"for protecting each individual member from oppression by those in power."

It is interesting to see how strong was the guiding consciousness of duty in members of these early Guilds, towards each other, and towards the community.

I sincerely trust that many of my colleagues will see the urgency of the proposed scheme, and will be ready to support it.

Yours truly,

BEATRICE KENT.

The Nurses' Lodge,  
Colosseum Terrace, N.W.

## PREMATURE BURIAL.

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

MADAM,—Having agreed to the overwhelming proofs of the dangers of live sepulture shown in Mr. Basil Tozer's able and instructive article on the Subject in the *Nineteenth Century and After*, and the urgent necessity of reform, I venture, with your kind permission, to earnestly appeal to your readers and the public generally to support the Association for the Prevention of Premature Burial in its endeavours to obtain legal safeguards against the possibility of such terrible occurrences in this country.

Numerous as are the facts cited by the author of the article referred to, many indisputable, and some recent cases of narrow escapes are omitted. For example, at Hinckley, in Leicestershire, last October, a living child was medically certified to be dead, and its death registered. There is also the case of a man who, on making an application to the magistrate at Old Street Police Court, stated that he had been picked up unconscious in the street and taken to the hospital, from whence he was conveyed to a workhouse infirmary. There he was pronounced dead, and laid in a coffin for three days in the mortuary.

Numbers of similar narrow escapes might be quoted, and it is probable that for one discovery a hundred death counterfeits escape detection. Those who are willing to assist this humane movement can obtain literature on the subject from the writer, by sending a stamped addressed en-

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