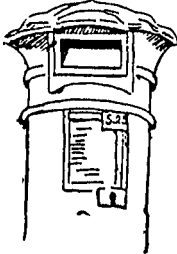


Letters to the Editor.



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 write to acknowledge with many thanks the cheque received for £1 1s. in connection with the Puzzle Prize, BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING for August.

Yours truly,

E. BURNETT.

118, Allerton Road, Woolton.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE POOR LAWS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Will the "Matron of a Metropolitan Poor Law Infirmary" kindly tell me to which part of my evidence she alludes when she says that I have tried "to injure the reputation of those who are working as faithfully and devotedly as the nurses of the great voluntary hospitals in the cause of the sick poor." I have not a copy of my evidence here in Scotland, but I think she must have misread what I said, or seen some garbled report.

Yours truly,

SYDNEY HOLLAND.

Kneesworth Hall, Royston, Herts.

FATHER HIGLEY ON POOR LAW INFIRMARIES.

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

MADAM,—May I be allowed to express my regret that the Hon. Sydney Holland, who has done so much for the poor of East London and for that magnificent institution, the London Hospital, should have given utterance to the extravagant and unjust remarks about Poor Law Infirmarys quoted in your issue of September 11th. As our voluntary hospitals come under the lash of unjust public criticism almost as often as our Poor Law Infirmarys I should have thought that this would have led Mr. Holland to aim at justice in his remarks about the latter. I know the London Hospital well, and Mr. Holland may remember my saying to him on one occasion that if I were a millionaire one of the first places that I would give a £1,000 to would be the London Hospital. I am afraid that Mr. Holland has been doing what is often done in the way of unfair criticism, and that is comparing the worst Poor Law Infirmarys with the best voluntary hospitals. I happen to know Poor Law Institutions all over the country, and I am quite sure that the best Poor Law Infirmarys compare favourably with the best voluntary hospitals, and I believe that patients in Poor Law Infirmarys stand just as much chance of recovery in a Poor Law Infirmary as they do in a voluntary hospital, and after all this is the main reason

for which both classes of these institutions are supposed to exist, although one may sometimes have legitimate doubts about this in the case of voluntary hospitals. I believe that under far more trying circumstances there is just as much love, devotion, and sympathy shown to the patients in Poor Law Infirmarys as in the voluntary hospitals. I am afraid Mr. Holland's experience of Poor Law Institutions generally is rather antique. The poor of this district are provided for at the expense of the Poor Law, in 80 different institutions, and the one great danger at the present time is not that people are reluctant to use the Poor Law Infirmarys, but that they are used more and more by a class for which they were never intended. Thus Mr. Lockwood, who till recently was one of the chief Inspectors of the Local Government Board in his report in 1906, says, "The truth seems to be that infirmarys are more and more meeting wants which were sufficiently supplied by the great hospitals before the population of London became so vast as it now is. It would surprise a good many persons to learn that when the census of 1901 was taken there were more than 13,000 patients in Workhouse Infirmarys in London, while in all the voluntary hospitals for London the number of patients only slightly exceeded 8,000. It is becoming so common for Guardians to recover considerable sums on account of treatment in their infirmarys, that it is unnecessary to labour the point that the acceptance of an offer for admission to an infirmary no longer proves destitution." Again, in 1907, Mr. Lockwood refers to the "continued tendency to use Poor Law Infirmarys on the part of persons for whom they were not originally intended." Now, I could give other testimonies as well as my own to the same effect, but I am afraid that I have already written enough. But I must add this one remark. If in Poor Law Infirmarys, where the work, according to Mr. Holland, is (1) not educational, (2) where it is not scientific, (3) where by inference little love and sympathy is shown, isn't it a gross act of cruelty on the part of Mr. Holland to frequently turn cases out of the London Hospital into the Poor Law Infirmarys when they have more interesting clinical material waiting for admission to the hospital?

Yours sincerely,

F. H. HIGLEY.

Catholic Church, 636, Commercial Road, E.

NURSING A KING.

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

DEAR MADAM,—In your issue of September 11th Mr. Holland is reported as saying in his evidence before the Poor Law Commission, "If we can train a nurse sufficiently well to nurse the King we can do it to nurse anybody else."

I have heard this argument made about two years' training at the London Hospital before. I do not say that the London Hospital nurses are not well trained, because I do not know anything about the system—as we have no educational standards we are all at sea—but I do say that it would be comparatively easy to nurse a King, for the simple reason that the nurse has little or no re-

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