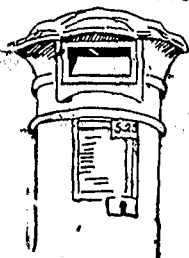


Letters to the Editor.



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.

THE RESULTS OF MAN-MADE LEGISLATION.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Your articles on Nursing Agencies will be widely read with interest, and the result of the new General Powers Act of the L.C.C., in so far as trained private nurses are concerned, is nothing short of disastrous. Once and for all it breaks up their independent right of co-operation, for who for the future (or until this unjust Act is amended) will encourage and help nurses to co-operate on just economic lines? You call its provisions "the apotheosis of the exploiter," and this very clearly describes the provisions of the Act as it affects trained nurses. God knows, it is hard enough at present for us to get out of the clutches of the middleman, and this ill-considered bit of legislation will batten us down altogether. It is to be hoped that after New Year private nurses will arouse public feeling on this question. Nothing can be more unjust, and, voteless, nothing can be more hopeless than the position of women workers in this country. I enclose card, and am ready to take part in any form of public protest against this despoiling Act. For years we have worked for the protection of the public, by adopting high standards of professional efficiency, maintaining good discipline, and now, unless we sink to the level of a lay-managed agency—which more often than not foists semi-trained and undisciplined women on the public as "trained nurses"—we are forbidden to exist. As to the disreputable so-called Nursing Homes—sinks of iniquity as many are known to be—which admit questionable cases, and send out questionable nurses, they are to be excluded from licence and inspection, and sweating Hospital Committees are also protected by the Act. How absolutely man-like such legislation is where women's labour is concerned!

I am,

Dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

AN INDIGNANT CO-OPERATIVE NURSE.

[Nurses are no worse off than other poor working women, in that they have no power in making the laws they are compelled to obey. As a public official remarked in connection with this new Act, which penalises the co-operative worker (the private nurse who claims her own fees): "If you don't explain it to the nurses they will know nothing of it!" No doubt true, as the lay nursing press, with its natural lack of ethical standards, fails to grasp as usual the nurses' as apart from the employers' point of view.—Ed.]

THE REINCARNATION OF SAIREY GAMP.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The reincarnation of Sairey Gamp much interested me, and I felt I would like to tell you what happened to me only last winter. I was Matron at a Cottage Nurses' Home, and was often very short of nurses, owing to the women having nurses for weeks before they were needed, being "cheaper than a charwoman!" But a woman living just opposite the home did the reverse. I called on her near the date she had booked to find her almost ready for the nurse. I made her send for the doctor, and promised to send a nurse if I could get one, but none could come until the following week, so I had to go myself. I was called up the next morning, and the doctor was there in good time, and the baby born quite normally. I kept on with the case, running over several times a day for a fortnight. I only did the nursing and baby and kept the room nice. When the Committee lady visited the mother she told her she had had many nurses "but had never been nursed before." Cottage nursing has ruined trained nursing in this county. It is very sad to see it. I could tell you many instances.

Yours faithfully,

E. E. P.

SELF-MANAGING BENEVOLENCE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The various memorials which are now being appealed for and organised to Miss Florence Nightingale, and the late King, are to take, I understand, in some cases, a charitable form for the benefit of nurses.

Your admirable journal has frequently warned nurses against the "professional philanthropist," but with your permission I should like to repeat that warning and to point out the folly of multiplying institutions all having the same ultimate object—viz., the relief of distress and misfortune.

A Benevolent Society is doubtless a necessity for the unfortunate members of our profession, but why cannot the promoters of such schemes amalgamate to form one Central Institution, having local branches where required, and administered by members of our profession, who have a practical experience of business as well of philanthropy. Such Benevolent Institutions as already exist are, in many cases, staffed by highly-paid officials, and the heavy cost of administration is out of all proportion to the average income of the class they are intended to benefit. The large sums of money dissipated in the administration of the numerous and flourishing benevolent schemes will, when ascertained, surprise those who are still unacquainted with the methods of the "professional philanthropist." His attitude towards those who hope to benefit by the charity of the subscribers is frequently such that one is reminded of Ruskin's description—viz., "As much charity as you please, but no justice."

Believe me to be,

Dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

MELBA.

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