

NURSING AND CLERICAL UNIFORMS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—One hardly knows whether Mr. Plowden, the Magistrate, is in earnest in giving his legal decisions, or whether he is trying to make the Court laugh.

But in a recent case before him a showman was charged with dressing himself up in the uniform of a naval officer, and Mr. Plowden argued that the showman had broken the law, had brought the uniform into contempt, and he fined him ten shillings.

Determined to get a laugh out of the Court, Mr. Plowden went on to say that if the showman, instead of wearing a naval uniform, had chosen the robes of a Lord Chancellor or of an Archbishop the law could not have touched him.

Now, seeing the abuse of nurses' uniform, perhaps Mr. Plowden might have withheld his pleasantry.

The uniform of a hospital nurse is a modernised form of the religious habit of the nuns, who, in olden times, had the care of the sick, and it is, therefore, as much a religious habit as is the dress of the priest.

So that, acting on Mr. Plowden's pleasantry, we may in time see the ladies who dress their nursery-girls, and the medical men who dress their housemaids in the habit of the hospital nurse, we may see these good people become ambitious as to their men servants, and may also dress them up in the religious habit.

It would be very imposing for ladies of the middle class to have their guests announced by a butler attired in the dress of a bishop of the Established Church. And it would make the fortune of a medical man in a fashionable district to have his patients ushered in and solicitously withdrawn by a clean-shaven young footman dressed up as a High Church curate.

True, the clerical dress does not lend itself to the more active duties of butler or footman, else we might see through the downstairs windows the pseudo bishop polishing his plate, or above stairs, the pseudo High Church curate cleaning the windows.

In Leamington Spa, to instance one place, I have frequently seen at a leading doctor's house his maid dressed in strict hospital uniform cleaning his windows. She also flirted with the passing cabman—though that was probably an interlude planned by herself. But it did not add dignity to the religious habit she was wearing.

Worse still, there is a dog hospital in Bayswater where the vet-owner engages two young persons dressed as hospital nurses to lead out on strings the dogs under his care.

Now, surely, the ladies who send their canine pets to him would like to see the kennel men dressed just like the clergy? It would suggest that their pets received pastoral aid or an episcopal solicitude, quite beyond the scope of honest kennelmen dressed like stable-boys.

Mr. Plowden says the public may do these things without breaking the law. If we look out we shall surely see such things done.

H. KENEALY.

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. M. P.—We know of no good general hospital which admits men for training. You must either become a soldier, and get trained in military hospitals, or enter a mental hospital, where the work is more or less of a special nature.

Governess, London.—Several women's hospitals charge a small fee. With the high rents and rates in West London, nursing homes are necessarily somewhat expensive. The Catholic Nurses' Institute admits patients for £1 1s. a week, the private rooms cost £2 2s. You can have your own medical man.

Mrs. S. G. Peters.—Am making enquiries, but no first-rate book contains both subjects. In the meantime, "Nursery Hygiene," by W. M. Feldman, is an admirable book. It is published by Ballière, Tindall & Cox, medical publishers, 8, Henrietta Street, W.C., price 3s. 6d.

Ignoramus, Dinan.—We know of no such list as you require. Write to the Matron, British Lying-in-Hospital, Ende Street, London, W.C., or any others on page 8 of our Supplement, and ask for terms.

NOTICES.

PRIZE OF TEN SHILLINGS.

The Editor will award a Prize of Ten Shillings to the designer of the best gauze mask to be worn by hospital out-patients after operations on the throat and nose. The designs are to be delivered at 20, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W., by first post on Tuesday, October 10th.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS FOR OCTOBER.

October 14th.—Describe in brief the disorders of the nervous system which occur after pregnancy.

October 21st.—Mention some important points to remember when giving lavage.

October 28th.—What accidents may occur to the child during delivery?

Rules for competing for our Prize Competition will be found on page xii.

The Editor begs to draw the attention of subscribers to the Notices in the Appointment Supplement—that all communications of a business nature are to be addressed to the Manager, at 431, Oxford Street, London, W. She is constantly receiving letters which do not refer to the Literary Department, and which cause unnecessary trouble and delay.

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