

The publication of a few more epistolary specimens such as that to which I allude, will lower still further in public opinion the type of nurse so eager to "rush to the front."

I am, yours sincerely,

ADA SAMUDA.

Albion Street, W.

[We feel sure the majority of nurses who have gone to Belgium and France to care for the sick and wounded, are animated by the dictates of humanity. Yet they cannot be too careful not to give offence through thoughtlessness and lack of refinement.—Ed.]

A REAL TRAGEDY.—A CASE FOR THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—In your issue of August 29th you gave publicity to some extracts from a local paper referring to unrest among the nurses at Barnet Infirmary. It will be remembered that six of the nurses sent in their resignations as a protest to what they stated was the unfair way in which the Superintendent Nurse had been treated.

The sequel to that unrest has been startling and tragic. It was announced in the *Finchley Press* of Friday last that Miss Phipps had, on Thursday morning, been found unconscious by the nurse who called her, and that her condition was due to an overdose of veronal. I have learned that, in spite of the great devotion and skill lavished upon her by the Medical Officer and her nurses, she passed away on Saturday evening without recovering consciousness.

The *Finchley Press* informs us that there was a significant letter addressed to the Coroner found in her room. Her body lies at the Nursing Home awaiting an inquest.

Miss Phipps was a nurse of high capability and power of organisation. She held the certificate of the Bristol Royal Infirmary, and was also a certified midwife. She was also a member of the State Registration Society.

More than two years ago, unhappily as it turned out for herself, she was appointed Superintendent Nurse of the above Infirmary. Is it too much to say that she is the victim of Poor Law methods?

To quote again from the local press, it appears that she was constantly pilloried before the Board on the flimsiest pretext. Sometimes for an accusation of excess of zeal; at others that she exhibited too little supervision. On the complaint of a childish old woman of ninety-five she was publicly called a "cruel woman."

Did a nurse resign? It was the fault of the Superintendent. The outbreaks of various epidemics that the Infirmary has unfortunately incurred, have occasioned the engagement of many temporary nurses. These have gone to swell the *thirty* who have recently come and gone. *The fault of the Superintendent Nurse!*

The humiliating subservience to the Master which is imposed by the L.G.B. galled a naturally proud and independent spirit, and it was whispered,

by those who knew, that Miss Phipps had to ask leave before inviting a friend to tea in the Nurses' Home, of which she was mistress.

Those who from the first had "compassed her about with words of hatred" in the end achieved their object, and, weary of the struggle, she at length yielded to pressure and sent in her resignation, on the understanding that the usual testimonial was granted. But the testimonial was the subject of more bitter animosity, made public again in the local press, and after being hard pressed by her friends, her opponents consented to a maimed document, which, significantly, she received two days before her illness.

On Tuesday, September 15th, Miss Phipps and her loyal nurses were to have left the Infirmary. She was going to take a "long rest" she said.

A recent visit from the Nurse Inspector of the L.G.B. produced a high tribute to the manner in which Miss Phipps performed her duties.

The Medical Officer has, on more than one occasion, spoken in praise of, and satisfaction with, her work and general efficiency, in spite of indignation. But in spite of expert opinion and warm support of the most enlightened members of the Board, ignorance and prejudice triumphed over justice and common sense. Wherein lay the root of the animosity that pursued her? In her independence of character and her rigorous insistence that a high nursing standard should be maintained. But what could not be bent, however, was at last broken. It is intolerable that educated professional women should be crushed on the wheels of such a system.

I leave it to you, Madam, who are so justly esteemed for your championship of nurses, to see if some representation cannot be made to the L.G.B. that a system which has brought about such a disaster should be thoroughly reconsidered. We want more women on Boards of Guardians in order that women's affairs can be sanely and fairly dealt with.

AN INDIGNANT RATEPAYER.

AN OUTRAGEOUS SUGGESTION.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I enclose cutting from to-day's *Times* in case you have not noticed it. The same account is appearing in the *Western Morning News* and other local papers.

Possibly the ladies concerned really mean ward maids, not emergency nurses.

Sincerely yours,

(Miss) H. BARTLEET.

(Member of Board, General Hospital, Birmingham).

67, Sandon Road, Edgbaston.

[We have received a number of very indignant letters on this matter. We shall refer to it again.—Ed.]

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

September 26th.—What do you know of anti-typoid vaccination and its preventive influence?

October 3rd.—Mention four classes of wounds and how they may be caused.

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