



Letters to the Editor.

Notes, Queries, &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.

We shall be happy to answer, as far as we can, all questions submitted to us.

INFIRMARY CHAPLAINS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—I have read the letter from "A Chaplain" with much interest, and having had experience of Workhouses and Infirmarys for nearly forty years, can confirm all his remarks as to the difficulties connected with the work. But on looking back, there is much cause for encouragement in many ways, especially as regards the building of chapels, of which I well remember the first, as I believe, at Cuckfield, many years ago.

But it is chiefly on the matter of officers and superintendents that I am anxious to express my hearty concurrence with the remarks made in that letter. It is at least thirty years since I expressed my conviction that the remedy for many of the evils which I had noticed, both in London and country Workhouses, would be in the appointment of officers of a superior position and character, with some training for

their difficult duties, and tact, as well as sympathy, for the various classes under their control. It is surprising that such posts should not be sought by the many educated women who are now applying for remunerative work; for separate Infirmarys and District Schools there are no difficulties in the way, but in Workhouses there is the unanimous desire of the Central Board, as well as of Guardians, that married couples should be employed, and this naturally complicates the matter, for though it would be easy to find educated women as Matrons, it would hardly be possible to obtain such men to fill the posts of masters, except in the larger Metropolitan Workhouses, where both officers of the Army and Navy would be well fitted for the position, as for prisons, and would possess the knowledge of government and discipline which is so essential.

But no Board has as yet had the courage to carry this out, the one idea, apparently, being to appoint officers with previous experience, which means having risen from the lower posts, and being trained in the narrow groove of Workhouse management, without regard to other qualities and fitness. But it is not only the higher officers who we desire to see thus fitted for their work. It is most important that there should be training for other posts also, both of men and women, and now that such are to be found for the Salvation Army, the Church Army, and other organisations, why should they not be forthcoming, if they were sought for, for this great national work also?

I venture to think there would be fewer persons taken before magistrates for refractory conduct and other offences if those who were placed in authority over them had some knowledge of governing, and maintained a dignified and calm bearing, instead of returning railing for railing, and abuse for abuse, as is now too often the case. I have myself heard the "grace" said before dinner, for a dining-room of

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