

dexterity and success." We may not like to own this ; cleverness is so much more admirable a characteristic—in fact, we may bubble up in warm indignation at so ill-natured and disloyal a suggestion concerning our sex, but "A Country Matron" has answered my inquiry with a concise bitterness, which confirms my suspicions beyond doubt.—Yours faithfully,

PERPLEXITY.

"NURSES' CERTIFICATES."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—I think Miss Cooper has unknowingly touched the key-note of my objection to "qualifying certificates" by any one individual, when she writes "IF an ideal Matron could always be found." It is just that IF which should deter the Governing Body of an institution from placing any official in the position which an infallible person alone should fill, and subjecting them to the inevitable accusations of injustice, by every recipient of a second-rate certificate. I repeat that an unsatisfactory system prevails in the school where I was trained, because absolutely no official report in writing, such as is customary at St. Thomas's and St. Bartholomew's, of the moral conduct of a Probationer, was ever given by the Sisters to the Matron, or demanded by the Committee from the Matron. Our training consisted in being moved from Ward to Ward as occasion required, for a period of two years, at the end of which time we were examined by our Lecturers, which consisted in answering six questions on the theory of Nursing and a *viva voce* of ten minutes each. Although no special training in the higher moral qualities of unselfishness, self-control, &c., was included in our curriculum, no reports given, and no marks awarded, at the end of the term the *quality* of our certificate apparently depended upon our personal characteristics, as they were endorsed as good, bad, or indifferent, according to the opinion of an official who passed through the Ward once in three months, and with whom many of us never exchanged half-a-dozen consecutive sentences, and who, receiving no official reports from the Sisters under whose immediate control we worked, based her opinion of our characteristics upon verbal tittle-tattle, or the most cursory personal observation. If "character and disposition" are to be remarked upon in black and white on a Nurse's certificate, then it is the duty of the committee to arrange, before they sign that certificate, that reports are given in black and white, at stated periods, by the Sisters to the Matron, concerning a Probationer's behaviour, which they should themselves inspect, that if the behaviour is unsatisfactory the Probationer should be reprovved for her faults, and thereby knowing of what she is accused may have the opportunity of improving herself, and attaining the desired standard. We all know how easy it is to deteriorate under lax discipline.

Miss Cooper is quite right to insist upon the value of "individual opinions," and at no reputable institution should a Nurse be admitted without minute inquiries from her former employers ; and no good Nurse expects or would value a certificate for theoretical work only. If it was a *sine qua non* that before signing a certificate the Matron should have personally supervised and helped her subordinates in their work,

seen or had their faults officially reported to her, and have gently yet firmly reprimanded them, and exhorted them to improve, awarded marks for moral qualities and practical work, without which no certificate should be given, Nurses' certificates would be of some real account, and not as they now are—mere bits of parchment of little practical value.—Yours faithfully,

A STAFF NURSE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—Will you favour me by inserting the following in your esteemed paper? Will some one kindly recommend the most useful books to assist Nurses in reading *prescriptions*; also to a knowledge of *Anatomy*? Permit me to say, Mr. Editor, that we as a body of Nurses find your paper a most valuable aid, for which we thank you. By inserting the inquiry you will greatly oblige.—Yours faithfully,

A NURSE.

St. Bartholomew's Hospital,
Rochester.

[The Pharmacopœias of St. Bartholomew's or the London Hospitals are the best works on the former subject. Blackie's Anatomy (One Shilling Series) will probably meet our correspondent's second requirement.—ED.]

DOCTORS AND NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—In reporting Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's remarks in discussing Dr. Sturges' paper, "Doctors and Nurses," you quote, "With regard to the question of recompense, it is very difficult for an intelligent woman to be satisfied with no recognition of her services, and no Nurse would despise a good income and position of authority as a reward for good work." Mrs. Fenwick also quietly remarked, "We are only human." Now it seems to me that this is a truism which might be borne in mind with advantage by the numerous writers concerning Nurses and their affairs, which are appearing so constantly in the daily papers. Nurses are human beings, and not angels by any means ; therefore, why should they, unlike men, attempt to base any life's work on sentimentality? It is neither healthy nor practicable. Who would accuse men, or advise them to start the battle of life from such an impossible standpoint? Nine Doctors out of ten become so because the profession of medicine is a congenial means of earning their bread honestly, not because sick humanity is waiting to be relieved from pain. That as a band Medical men are the most generous, kindly, and unselfish of men is an acknowledged fact ; but all the same, the competition is keen amongst them for this world's loaves and fishes. Scholarships, lectureships, honours, degrees, appointments, medals and titles are by no means despised by the most worthy of men. Are these good things Dead Sea fruit? I cannot believe it.

I can never forget the face of a young Hospital Sister when congratulating her upon her appointment to a most honourable post, when she answered with fervour, "Yes, this is joy." Joy to feel oneself in a sphere congenial to one, honoured, remunerated, independent. Why affect indifference when gratification

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