

inclined to think slightly of "Our Pioneers," who were not thus classified and organised; are apt to forget the moral strength and courage needed in the Nursing field in their day, to forget that they have made the rough places smooth for us, and opened up a new vocation for their successors to follow, evolving the practice of Nursing from a simple womanly task into an art and science befitting cultured professional women. I do not think we can over-value their services.

Sincerely yours,
H. KENEALY.

"ASSOCIATION OF ASYLUM WORKERS."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was much interested in the letter signed "Trained Attendant" in your last issue, and in conjunction with the Editorial articles which have been appearing the last few weeks, it becomes a matter of importance to a large class of workers (Asylum attendants), of which I am one. Your remarks, and lucid explanation of the future organization of the Profession of Nursing, for medical, surgical and obstetric Nurses, prompts me to ask, is it intended to include Mental Nurses in any legislation which is likely to take place in the near future? It appears to me that their interests must be considered in any Bill which may be drafted, and that the Association of Asylum Workers must be up and doing, to help to define the necessary curriculum of training for a Mental Nurse, as the latter title suits the class of workers much better than the name Asylum Attendant. It should be the aim of our Asylum authorities to provide Nurses, not keepers, for the insane. I hope we shall have a liberal expression of opinion concerning this important question, in your columns.

Yours,

"MENTAL NURSE."

[We should imagine that a Parliamentary Bill for the Registration of Trained Nurses would include ALL Nurses—the Nursing Council defining the necessary curriculum of education and standard of knowledge.—ED.]

"WOLF CRIES."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—It seems to me that the "alarms and cries" respecting the basins in barbers' shops, kissing, unwashed pence, &c., referred to in your paper of August 17th, scarcely deserve the epithet of "Wolf" cries, as they do represent real sources of danger, though perhaps on so small a scale as to be hardly worth considering in our daily conduct. This last, however, cannot be said of piano-playing, which, when thoroughly studied, must be a great tax on the nervous system. The mechanical part of it is not the only one to be taken into account; there are also the mental and emotional sides of the question. The mere physical energy expended is not inconsiderable. Anyone with but a slight knowledge of human anatomy must see what a number of muscles with their motor nerves are brought into play to cause the necessary rapid and elastic motions, combined with strength, required of the upper arms, forearms, the hands and fingers; to enable one to sit upright; to perform the movements of the body required both to balance it and to play on any part of a long keyboard; to make constant use of the pedals; and—what is more or less inevitable—to look from the music before one to the keys. The sensory nerves belonging to the special senses of sight, hearing and touch, which Professor Bain has called "the more intellectual senses," are appealed to in the playing of musical instruments as in few other occupations; and not only so, but they are worked upon simultaneously. Then again, with regard to each one of these senses, the effort must be made not merely passively to receive and convey impressions to the brain, but to educate them to the highest possible perfection of perception.

Among the duties of the mental functions are included development of artistic feeling as regards rhythm, and pro-

portion of tone; the solving of the simple arithmetical problem to be found in every bar of music; the cultivation of rapidity and concentration of thought; application of the laws of the grammar and theory of music and of harmony; cultivation and exercise of memory, conception, interpretation; and the discovery of the best methods of producing mechanical and artistic effects.

Music is popularly defined as, and is generally acknowledged to be, the language of the emotions. The result upon the nerves of the excessive stimulation of the emotions, as practised daily and systematically by piano students, must be regarded by thoughtful people as anything but strengthening to the nervous system.

Following as a consequence of the student's physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion, we find naturally enough a disinclination to take open air exercise, and an inability to eat heartily and sleep well.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned facts, can it be wondered at that amongst those who associate with musical artists, they are proverbially ill-tempered, irritable, and "made up of nerves"?

I lived for many years in "the musical metropolis of the world," and heard as the unsolicited opinion of many doctors there, that the study of pianoforte playing and of music in general was a direct and frequent source of nervous diseases in all their varied forms. In my presence a piece of advice was given to a piano student by an eminent physician, a professor at one of the most celebrated continental universities, as the result of years of experience, and one which meets, it would seem, the views of the Parisian doctor from whom you quote. He said, "If you wish to preserve a sound body, give up the study of music, for it acts through the nervous system as a slow, insidious, but sure poison."

All this can hardly be realised by those who speak of pianoforte playing as tinkling and strumming.

Yours truly,

A LOVER OF THE ART.

Leamington Spa.

August 29th, 1895.

"SISTERS OR NURSES."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I wish it was possible to send a copy of the RECORD to the Board of a certain Infirmary. There are one or two gentlemen on the Committee who need enlightening with regard to the terms used in hospitals describing "Sister" and "Nurse," and I think the perusal of a paper conducted on large-minded principles may be of benefit to them. Recently the Matron had suggested that each head Nurse in the Infirmary should be styled "Sister" instead of "Nurse," and the House Committee agreed to the proposal. But at the general meeting of the Board the matter came up again, and diverse views were expressed. Some gentlemen supported the change proposed, alleging that the charge Nurses in a small institution had as much right to the title of "Sister" as charge Nurses in a large institution. Another gentleman considered the term "Sister" harmless enough, but he thought to some persons it would be like a red rag to a bull, and it might lead to friends being alienated. A third gentleman had telegraphed to Bradford and Huddersfield, and had found that the charge Nurses in the Infirmary there were not called "Sisters," and he thought their Infirmary need not make a precedent that might create religious animosity, and would do no good. Finally the Board decided to retain the title of "Nurse" in place of adopting the title of "Sister," the chairman remarking that the recommendation was passed by the Committee without thinking of its full significance.

Now I hope these gentlemen will carefully read the copies of the NURSING RECORD and learn something about modern nursing methods.

Your obedient servant,
CHARGE NURSE.

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