



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.

THE MACCLESFIELD INFIRMARY.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—In your paper of September 28th, I read a long article on the affairs at the Macclesfield Infirmary. It gives me great satisfaction to see that the professional press has at last taken up the subject.

It is necessary that something should be done in the interests of the Infirmary and its patients; also in the interest of the Probationers, who are supposed to receive there a full and sufficient training; and nothing can be done, I feel sure, until professional criticisms are brought to bear upon the whole matter.

A "retrograde" step has been taken by the Governors of the Infirmary, as is justly remarked, as regards the Nursing system, which in the last Matron's time had been so much improved, and was working so well, she having aimed in following the example of the efficient training schools of the kingdom in the course she pursued.

No good can, I feel sure, be effected at the Macclesfield Infirmary until a clean sweep is made, and a new start effected. And it appears that the public are aware of this, as the subscriptions have so very largely fallen off since June of this year; many subscribers ascribing their reasons for withdrawing their subscriptions to the bad and entirely faulty management of the Infirmary.

Very little confidence can be reposed in the Governors, or at least in the *working* portion of the Governors, viz., the House Committee; they are not of a class, neither have they such a knowledge of the management of an Infirmary as to inspire confidence, and their ignorance on the subject makes them apparently unwilling to accept the advice, or to acknowledge that others who have had the experience can, and are willing to, help them.

I can speak from experience of the class of Probationers turned out originally by the Macclesfield Infirmary after a year's training, as I have come across several of them, and they have shown that a one-year's training has but given them a very limited smattering of the duties and qualifications such as are required of Nurses at the present time.

Those who have had experience in Nursing matters know what a danger to the public a so-called Nurse of one year's training may be when entrusted with responsibility. A Probationer in the Macclesfield Infirmary is not likely to stay on for a second year if she has obtained a certificate at the end of one, that is, if she is wise and enterprising, and anxious to get on in her profession, as the experience gained there in one year is very small, and she may justly wish to go on to another Hospital, where she will gain a larger experience and knowledge necessary for the full training, which is so absolutely essential in the proper Nursing of sick people, who are entitled to the best possible care.

I see from your paper that Sisters of long and varied experience are no longer appointed to be heads of the wards as under Miss Wingfield's rule, and this must be in every way detrimental to the Infirmary, both as regards the skilful Nursing of the patients, and the careful, interested and experienced training of the Probationers.

If some of the officers of the Infirmary or of the Nursing staff of the Infirmary were removed, there is no doubt that a more perfect, just and peaceful state of affairs would be arrived at. I understand that the one Governor who especially had the good of the Infirmary, the patients, and the Nurses at heart more than any other, was, from by no means the best motives, rendered by his colleagues unable to give that help, assistance and experience which would have always been such a boon to the Infirmary, and have kept it from sinking to the depths of misrule, at which unfortunately at the present time it seems to have arrived.

Anyone who has seen the correspondence, &c., concerning the resignation of the late Matron (Miss Wingfield) on account of ill-health, will be able to judge of the kind of men to whom the affairs of the Macclesfield Infirmary are entrusted, and this correspondence, &c., does not reflect to their credit.

It is with grief that those interested in Hospitals, Infirmarys and Nursing matters see the backward step taken by the Macclesfield Infirmary, when it had apparently made so many steps forward for its own welfare, and that of the patients and Nurses between June, 1894, and June, 1895.

I am, madam,

Yours, &c.,

"AN ON-LOOKER."

October 8th, 1895.

MADAM,—I was very interested in reading the criticism of the present management of the Nursing Department at the Macclesfield Infirmary in your issue of the 28th ult.

I was one of the Sisters during the late Matron's term of office, and shall be glad if you can spare me space in your columns for a short letter concerning matters at the Infirmary. In June, 1894, the Nursing of the Institution was in a most chaotic condition, in fact, it is no exaggeration to say there was no Nursing, from a scientific basis. Upon the appointment of Miss Wingfield as Matron she suggested to the House Committee numerous details of management, all tending to produce order, discipline, and efficiency in her department. The first evil she attacked was the system of Nursing the hospital with a succession of raw paying Probationers, which resulted in the extension of the term of training from one to two years. Thoroughly trained Nurses were appointed as Sisters and Night Superintendent, and the domestic department was also greatly reformed. It would trespass too much upon your valuable space to detail the numerous improvements, or rather reforms, instituted by this able and conscientious lady. There were reforms everywhere—in the regulations for Nurses, in the wards, in the theatre, in the kitchen, diets, supervision of the servants, and in the accommodation for the Nurses. Lectures were instituted for the Probationers, and a high standard of practical efficiency enforced. The pupils and Sisters themselves greatly appreciated the high standard of duty set them, and demanded by, the Matron. This was, briefly, the hard year's work accomplished under the daily courage, patience and devotion of the late Matron, and it is no wonder that the ignorance and lack of courtesy exhibited by the majority of the House Committee concerning this great work, proved too great a strain upon her health, and necessitated her resignation.

It is heartrending to those who helped to inaugurate these reforms to read that the Governors have now returned to the obsolete and impossible system of attempting to Nurse the poor patients by a succession of one-year Probationers, and your timely remarks concerning their policy will, we feel sure, result in the determination upon the part of the more enlightened subscribers to institute a more modern standard of Nursing in the Macclesfield Infirmary.

I am,

A LATE SISTER OF THE MACCLESFIELD INFIRMARY.

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