

HOURS FOR HOSPITAL NURSES.*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—I read my RECORD from cover to cover every week, but so far have not expressed an opinion upon the numerous interesting professional questions which are constantly under discussion in your admirable paper; but I must have a word concerning an eight hours day.

No Matron who takes a real interest in her Nurses (and I believe a very large majority of us conscientiously try our very utmost to make their lives happy and their work as light as possible, with an efficient care of the sick) can deny that within late years enormous demands have been made by the advance of medical science upon the mental vitality of Nurses, and that if even the very roughest of the work—such as fires, floors, lavatories, &c.—have been deputed to wardmaids, the strain of nursing now is far greater than it was twenty years ago. Now, when I first began my training, in 1875, my hours were as follows: 5.45 a.m., rise; 6.0, breakfast; 6.30, ward; 1 p.m., dinner; 4.0, tea; 9.0, supper; 9.30, chapel; 10, bed. That was practically 15 hours on duty, *and this for six days out of seven*, as each Nurse was off duty only one day a week for six hours.

One week's holiday was granted in the year, and yet the majority of the Nurses were never off duty ill. Now, it must be owned that things have been greatly improved since that time, the actual working hours of a Nurse being usually from ten to twelve hours, but lightened by whole and half days off duty at least twice in the month, with additional leave on Sunday.

Annual holidays now range from two to four weeks, and yet what is the result. Great numbers of Nurses break down under the overstrain of Hospital work, and it is no uncommon thing for ten per cent. of a nursing staff to be on the sick list. What is the reason, and where are we to find the remedy.

We must look for the reason in the *mental* and not the *physical* strain, and we must find the remedy in relieving that mental strain.

An eight hours day, without organisation in our educational course, will not have the desired effect; in fact, it is not unlikely that it will add to our present troubles.

I shall hope to find the opinions of others, who with myself must be interested in this question, expressed in the RECORD.

Yours truly,
CALEDONIA.

SANITARY PAPER HANDKERCHIEFS.*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—I should be so much obliged if you, or any of your readers, could tell me where to obtain the new Sanitary Paper Handkerchiefs for the use of phthisical patients. I have heard about them but cannot recall the maker.

Sept. 14th, 1896.
Yours faithfully,
ENQUIRER.

NURSES AND COSMETICS.*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

MADAM,—I extract the following advertisement from a fashionable London newspaper, and I send it to you as representing one phase of the use to which a Nurse may put her training and talents. I must con-

cess—though doubtless the Nurse has to live—that I am not proud to see the letters R.B.N.A. attached to such an advertisement as is here given:—

SKIN and COMPLEXION.—Hospital Nurse, R.B.N.A., Lond., 1888, Masseur, VISITS LADIES for the celebrated Court Treatment, for imparting to the face and throat a clear and healthy complexion; all lines completely removed, and corpulency reduced; highest testimonials from physicians, nobility, &c.—Address, Nurse ———.

Now I am not going to argue on conventional lines, and suggest that it is unprofessional and undignified to descend to the practice of the art of using cosmetics. I am going to suggest—although please remember that personally I do not approve—that perhaps we are wrong in our assumption that nursing has to do only with the diseased. We must bear in mind that there are skin specialists one of whose aims is to remove the unsightliness caused by eruptions, blotches, pimples, &c. Now, following out this line of argument, is it not legitimate for the Nurse to place at the disposal of possible patients any knowledge she may have on the subject of skin and complexion? Or would she, in doing this, be guilty of a trespass on the doctor's domains, and thus be, to some extent, a practitioner? I think it would be most interesting and instructive if some of your readers would give us the benefit of their views on this subject, as it seems to me that here we may touch on many points that will enlighten us as to how far we may go as "beautifiers." Individually, I have no intention of becoming a "cosmetic Nurse"; but, as a question of ethics, I should like to know whether assistance of this kind is legitimate or no, and whether we should regard any woman who turns her talents in this profitable direction as having forfeited her right to be looked upon as a *bona fide* Nurse, and relegated to the ranks of the "quack."

Sincerely yours,
A SEEKER AFTER TRUTH.

PROVISION FOR OLD AGE.*To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

MADAM,—I see that at a special meeting of the Cardiff Workhouse Visiting Committee it was resolved to grant Nurse Kenna a superannuation allowance of £13 per annum. Presumably—although I am a mere onlooker and know nothing either of the Nurse or the Workhouse—this Nurse has given long and good service, or superannuation would not have been considered. Then what a beggarly and niggardly sum to grant. What provision for her needs can she possibly make from £13 a year. At the recent Nursing Conferences some very interesting points were raised from the industrial and provident side of the Nurses' life, and many speakers pointed out the absolute impossibility of Nurses, with their limited incomes, making much provision for old age and a time when they were past work. Several schemes were suggested and tentatively put forward to better the possibilities of some sort of insurance against the possible privations of old age. Now I want to know if these suggestions cannot take some definite shape. Is it of any use for us to rely on others—to rely on a possible pension of £13 yearly after our life's work is done—or should we not seriously set to work to help ourselves. Will not the readers of the RECORD contrive to formulate some Self-Help Scheme.

Sincerely yours,
A SELF-HELPING WOMAN.

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