

think there are practical difficulties in the way. In a cold and draughty cottage it is very doubtful if the babies could be kept warm. They would at least require a hot-water bottle, which would not be likely to be available if the cradle were not forthcoming, and I am afraid that death from cold, sore eyes, and other troubles, would be the result of adopting this plan. I think that it would be found upon inquiry that a mother of the artizan class rarely, if ever, uses a cradle for a young infant, and her instinct is to some extent right. It would seem as if all very young animals (babies included) need the warmth they obtain from close contact with the parent, unless artificial heat, such as that afforded by a well-heated room, or a hot-water bottle, is obtainable, and these are not usually available amongst the labouring classes. I am afraid that until many mothers take a higher view of their parental responsibilities, and cultivate the virtues of morality and sobriety, the massacre of the innocents will continue, unless coroners take a much more serious view of cases of overlaying than is for the most part the case at present.

I am, dear Madam, yours faithfully,
OBSTETRIC NURSE.

A CRUEL DEMAND.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I am glad that one of your correspondents calls attention to the cruel practice, which is still, unfortunately, not obsolete, of requiring one nurse to undertake the nursing, day and night, of a critical case for a week or longer. I wonder whether the Chairman of the London Hospital, who always stands by nurses in their just demands, and indeed obtains more for them than they would ever ask for themselves, is acquainted with this barbarous custom. I cannot help thinking that he would devote his energy, and his great influence, to proving to those medical men, who insist upon it, the cruelty of the practice, if he realized what it means to nurses. Again, why do the nurses themselves consent to undertake so impossible a position? Is there a man who would? I do not believe it. There would soon be a hue and cry; but then, men have votes, and can bring their influence to bear in this way. We women are voteless, and our interests and grievances can, therefore, safely be ignored, and the saddest part of it all is that so many women like this degrading position. If it were not so, would half the nation remain disenfranchised? The fact is, the women have so long been in the position of slaves that they have developed all their attributes, and prefer a certain amount of comfort, ease and patronage, to obtaining the rights which will, when gained, entail responsibility and, therefore, trouble. If nurses considered their obligations to one another, they would never countenance individually a practice which is disastrous to them morally and physically; and collectively they would effectively protest against it by one and all declining to undertake a position in which they cannot do their duty by their patients.

I am, dear Madam, yours faithfully,
DISFRANCHISED.

[We quite agree with our correspondent that the kindly chairman of the London Hospital would, in common with all reasonable people, condemn the

practice of keeping one woman on duty with a critical case night and day for a week, as a barbarous one. We believe that it was one of the tortures practised in the Middle Ages to keep criminals awake day and night. Even then they did not have the strain of a hand to hand fight with death in addition, so that the position of the nurse described above is even more pitiable.—ED.]

THANKS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR EDITOR,—I have seen no reference in your delightful journal to the book reviews which, week by week, form one of the most interesting features of "our RECORD." I am a great reader, and I should like to express to "G. M. R.," whoever she is—for, from sympathetic little touches, I feel sure "G. M. R." is a woman—my warm appreciation of the help her reviews have been to me during the past year in my choice of books. When one lives in the country, as I do, and has not much intercourse with intellectual people, it is the very greatest help to turn to the RECORD for advice as to what to read. Wishing you, and your able staff, health and strength to continue the great work you are engaged in, in conducting a journal with the worthy object of elevating Nursing into a recognized profession,

I remain, dear Madam,
AN ARDENT ADMIRER,

[Thanks—ED.]

Comments and Replies.

Matron, Belfast.—We should strongly advise you to bring up all your daughters as you do your sons, and educate them with a view to their adopting a skilled profession, by which, should necessity arise, they can earn their own living. One of the saddest features of the labour market, which constantly comes before women workers, and compels their attention, and saddens those who are thinkers, is the fact of the rush made by necessitous gentlewomen for paid posts in which expert knowledge is not required. Positions of this description are often miserably paid. Naturally so, when even a most meagre salary attracts scores of applicants. The law of supply and demand governs the price of the value of work, and if for one vacant post there are dozens of women ready to accept it at almost any salary, the market value of their work is the lowest salary that any one of them, who is able adequately to perform it, is willing to accept. The problem, however, of how women are to live and present a respectable appearance on the salaries which their unskilled labour commands is a most sad one. How, for instance, can a girl, accustomed to a comfortable home, support herself on a salary of £1 a week, which is not at all an unusual remuneration for clerks, typewriters, and so on? Try it for a few weeks yourself, and then see if you would like your daughters to have no better prospect before them. So many women, with really good abilities, can do nothing thoroughly because they have never applied themselves seriously to mastering one thing, often from a false idea that paid work is derogatory to them. It is far more derogatory to be incompetent and dependent upon other people.

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