

QUID PRO QUO.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—There appears to me to be a good deal of justice in the suggestion made by your correspondent that, if nurses are to pay for their education in the same way as medical students, they should share the domestic work of the hospitals. This appears to be only an equitable arrangement. Why should the student be deprived of his undoubted right to be instructed in the science of cleanliness? If it is, as no one will deny, of such importance in his work, he surely should be taught the practical art of keeping things clean, and this knowledge will, without a doubt, be of the utmost value to him for the rest of his life. I put it on this ground rather than on the ground that it is unfair that all the drudgery should fall on the woman, and all that is interesting and easy be the portion of the man. I hope the committees of hospitals will see the justice of adopting some such course when their schools of nursing are what they are called, in fact as well as in name.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
NURSE MINNIE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—May I endorse the remarks made by "Busy Bee," in your issue of March 12th, with regard to probationers paying for their training? The utter disregard by those in authority of the value to the hospital of the immense amount of work done by the probationers has often been a wonder to me.

Of course every well trained nurse acknowledges the value of a thoroughly practical and all round experience, and in my own case I only desired that the work might have been lightened by more help, rather than abolished.

At the same time, as a just minded woman, I ask, is it right to demand payment for the privilege of tidying and cleaning beds, pots, pans, etc., of a hospital ward? Or is in this case the "labourer not worthy of his hire," because it is a time honoured abuse to use nurses to the utmost, for the profit of a hospital?

Believe me, Madam,
Yours faithfully,
JUSTICE.

MALE MIDWIVES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—The letter of your correspondent, "A female obstetric nurse," in your issue last week, voices what I think must be the feelings of a great many women. It is extraordinary that women can bring themselves to accept the services of any man, whether midwife or fully qualified medical man, as accoucheur. Custom alone has made it possible, and custom makes all things endurable. Imagine a woman in the East submitting to similar services from a man! Surely in this respect the feelings of Eastern women ring more truly than do those of Englishwomen, who pride themselves on their advanced civilization. If an Indian woman were given the choice of the services of a medical man, and recovery, or no attention and death, under these circumstances, she would, I believe, unhesitatingly choose the latter. Her instinct, therefore, as to the impropriety of being attended by a man must be strong indeed; and who shall say that it is not

right? Another point, whilst touching on the subject of midwives, and one upon which I feel strongly, I should like to mention. We hear a great deal just now about midwives, about the necessity for their registration, or the harmfulness of such a course, according to the point of view of the speaker. Personally, I do not desire to see midwives registered as such. I should like to see all nurses registered with the triple qualification of medical, surgical, and obstetric nursing, as medical men have to possess a triple qualification before they can practise any one of the three branches, and the point of view of those persons who clamour against the registration of midwives, while they declaim against the registration of nurses, is, I confess, an enigma to me. If we look the question of the registration of midwives fairly in the face, I believe we shall find that many persons object to it because, like myself, they believe that legislation upon a scientifically unsound basis is being demanded. Others again object on the ground of the imperfect education of the midwife—this, again, is so. But, if one is to be quite frank, the education of the average medical practitioner in midwifery is imperfect and superficial to the last degree, and he is the person to whom the midwife has to appeal in case of difficulty. No doubt, as a nurse, I have no business to have any opinions upon this subject at all, but one cannot well avoid seeing what is under one's very eyes, and I have very well defined views on this subject. They are these:—Let medical men insist upon a higher standard for midwives—it is wanted. But this insistence would come with better grace from them if they raised the standard of midwifery required of medical students very considerably. It is noticeable also that the members of the medical profession who appreciate the work of midwives are, for the most part, those who, being at the head of their profession, do not find that the midwives come into competition with them in their struggle for daily bread. Those members of the medical profession who are perfectly certain that midwives are an evil to be put down, are those who find that the midwives absorb some of the work which would otherwise bring grist to their own mill. If one could take the opinion of medical men who were not so affected, I am bound to say it would have more weight. Even then we should have to take into consideration the intolerance of the male sex to women putting their hand to serious work of any sort. They resent the fact being forced upon them that woman was formed for any purpose except that of ministering to their personal comfort, and it will take, I am afraid, several generations to make them fully appreciate its force. This is all very improper I know. It has the one unpardonable fault: it is true.

Yours obediently,
ANOTHER OBSTETRIC NURSE.

[We sympathize with our correspondent's view as to lying-in women being attended by members of their own sex, but we are of opinion that these should be either fully qualified medical women, or registered nurses with special maternity training, acting under the direction of medical practitioners. We believe that the best nurses, that is to say those who are most highly trained, and have therefore sounded the depths of their own ignorance, do not care to undertake midwifery cases without being in touch with a medical practitioner whose services can be quickly available if necessary.—ED.]

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