

and still worse accommodation, and at last I had to leave to avoid a complete breakdown. From start to finish no one explained that it was simply "taking hold of the wrong end of the stick" to have such a training without a groundwork of general training. The Matron even assured me that I was competent to nurse *any* case! I said, "Not such cases as typhoid." She replied, "Of course, you could nurse a typhoid case." However, though I had not then grasped the situation, I refrained from meddling with typhoid cases. I honestly stated the limits of my training when I took up private nursing, and was astonished to find doctors place so little value on a full training, as to think me capable of nursing medical cases. For several years I occasionally took these as well as maternity cases. I should say only a third of the latter could strictly be described as normal. In many instances I replaced other "Monthly Nurses" who, by lack of training and intelligence, had succeeded in diverting the case from its normal course in a few days. Though all those cases ended well, I was keenly conscious of my limitations with regard to a knowledge of the *science* of nursing—the *art* of it was, I think, born in me. This experience has made me fully realise how absolutely necessary it is for the Maternity Nurse, whether she acts also as midwife or not, to have received a three years' general training, and previously to that a good education—and education not only by tuition but by circumstances also. It is a terrible thing that the subsequent health, and often the lives of mothers and infants should be in the hands of these ignorant "Midwives" and "Monthly Nurses," who undertake such cases so lightly. It is, indeed, a case of fools rushing in where angels might fear to tread, so fraught with probable danger are all these cases.

Having wasted capital and the necessary fund of physical strength over training as a "Certified Monthly Nurse," I cannot now make use of that training, for if I did I should be a "Nurse-fraud," and I am now unable to stand the "test" of a three years' training.

Who, after such an experience, would not condemn the present system, and clamour for State Registration?

I am, dear Madam,

Yours truly,

A VICTIM OF THE SYSTEM.

10th March, 1901.

[This is a plain statement of fact, and we sincerely sympathise with the writer—we also sincerely approve her honourable conduct.—ED.]

#### A CENTRAL PRELIMINARY TRAINING SCHOOL.

*To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—We are much indebted to you for keeping your readers in touch with the progress in nursing education which is taking place in other parts of the world. In this country we seem just now to have arrived at a condition of stagnation, and, were it not for our RECORD which acts as a weekly stimulant, we might be tempted to think that we were not progressing because we had reached the highest plane attainable, forgetting that nursing, being a science, can never reach this level, but must always progress if it is not to retrogress. To those of us who do strive to keep up to the mark in professional matters the splendid organization of the Nursing School of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, U.S.A., as detailed by you

in the NURSING RECORD recently causes almost a shock of surprise, and makes us realize how very much more we must accomplish before we can preen ourselves on the excellence of our arrangements with regard to nursing education. How are we Matrons of hospitals where the Committees are entirely contented with the present condition of things, and indeed believe that their nursing staff is the best in the United Kingdom, which in their estimation means in the world, to be convinced that many improvements, involving expenditure, are necessary in order to bring nursing education up-to-date?

I also feel that a real difficulty with which the Matrons of small general hospitals have to contend, and with which we should at once be faced if we suggested the establishment of a course of preliminary training, is that we have so few new probationers that the organization of a preliminary school seems almost a farce, as well as an unnecessary expense. Therefore, while fully agreeing to the principle and desirability of preliminary training, I do not see how it is to be carried out except by means of some central organization. Perhaps the Committees of small general hospitals might combine, in order to provide this necessary part of a nurse's education. Hoping that you will kindly give publicity to this suggestion in your valuable paper in order that the opinions of other Matrons may be obtained upon it,

I am, Dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

PROVINCIAL MATRON.

[We quite agree with our correspondent that a Central Preliminary Training School is desirable, but we think that the expense of maintaining it should be borne by the pupils. They are receiving a valuable education, to fit them for a remunerative profession, and it is only right that they, and not the subscribers to public charities, should bear the cost.—ED.]

#### BELOW THE SALT.

*To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

MADAM,—I have been private nursing many years, and like it, and have generally been most happy in my work, and have received great kindness from many patients and their families, but, of course, I have had to accommodate myself to circumstances—sometimes I have had to feed with the domestics—and as long as I am able to do the nursing without interference injurious to the patient, I am content. It seems no use for nurses to strive for any professional position in private nursing, because we haven't got any. We are only servants—no status legally, or anything, so why kick against the pricks? I have always made a point of pleasing my doctors and patients, and I have done very well with money, and in the long run, even in the highest circles, nothing else counts, it's not possible for women to better themselves in this country, where everyone is striving to make both ends meet, and I often wonder you have the heart to try and rouse up nurses to a sense of self-respect—I'm sure they can't afford to have any, general affability is the best—the RECORD often makes me very uncomfortable, although I try to be a philosopher and not to mind having mean aspirations.

Yours truly,

ONE WHO MAKES PRIVATE NURSING PAY.

[We do not know when we have received so sad a letter.—ED.]

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