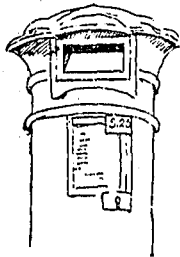


Letters to the Editor.

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.

NURSING UNDER THE POOR LAW.*To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—I read with much interest Mr. Humphrey's letter in last week's RECORD. It appears to me that what is needed, if nursing under the Poor Law is to become a popular branch of nursing work, is to give it the prestige of a Government Service; to separate Infirmaries entirely from Workhouses and Workhouse control; to give the Superintendents of Nursing the same authority in the management and discipline of the nursing staff as they have in well ordered civil Hospitals, and to make them responsible for the efficient nursing of the sick to a central nursing department formed in connection with the Local Government Board.

I do not think that it is just to nurses to say that they will not work in Poor Law Infirmaries because of the monotony of the life. Cases in chronic and incurable homes are quite as monotonous, and even more so than in Poor Law Infirmaries, yet when these are efficiently managed there is little difficulty in maintaining an adequate nursing staff. The fact is that in many workhouse infirmaries the conditions are such that it is impossible to nurse the patients properly. The nursing staff is insufficient, there is no discipline, and there is that constant source of friction, the control of the workhouse master and matron. Under these conditions nurses will not accept office, and small blame to them, but with a properly organised nursing service, the work would be so arranged that I venture to say there would not only be a sufficiency of nurses and probationers forthcoming, but there would be more applicants than vacancies, so that there would be a possibility of choice. At present how often we see in connection with Poor Law vacancies "there were no applicants, and the clerk was instructed to advertise again." Or, "there was one applicant for the post, and she was appointed."

The remedy, and the only remedy, for the present condition of things, is to put the management of a Poor Law Nursing Department into the hands of trained nurses, giving them due authority, and holding them responsible for its efficiency.

I am, dear madam,
Yours faithfully,
COMMON SENSE.

A PRACTICAL POINT.*To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—I should be so much obliged to you if you would allow me to ask the opinion of your readers as to the best method of cleansing a patient's feet. When it is not possible to put them into a bath I often find it difficult to get them to a degree of cleanliness which satisfies me. Soap and water will do much, but not enough. Some nurses I know wrap

the feet in lint wrung out in warm water, cover this with gutta-percha tissue, and cover the whole with a bandage, and remove it at the end of twelve hours, when the feet are softened and are then easily cleansed. In extreme cases this procedure is certainly useful, but there are the feelings of the patient to be considered, and I think the above treatment is somewhat an humiliation. I should much like to know the practice of other nurses on this point.

Yours sincerely,
CLEANLINESS.

A PLEA FOR METHOD IN EDUCATION.*To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—The notes published in last week's RECORD upon hospital kitchens afford food for reflection. What do the large majority of nurses, even those who aspire to the higher posts and hope to become Matrons, know of the relative value of food stuffs, of economy of administration, of the simplest elements of cookery? Truth compels the answer—nothing. They may gain practical experience when they have to administer the domestic departments of institutions, but the patients and staff and the pockets of the subscribers suffer during the process. It appears to me it is quite time that the same system of education was introduced with regard to girls as to boys. At fourteen, at the latest, as a rule, a boy's future profession is settled, and his education shaped accordingly. Girls stay at school till about seventeen or eighteen, no particular direction being given to their studies, then, in the case of nurses, dawdle about at home from eighteen to twenty-three, when they try to cram into a three years' course all the knowledge that should have been systematically mapped out for them at fourteen, and which they should have spent the subsequent years in acquiring.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours very truly,
A LOVER OF METHOD.

THE INTERNATIONAL NURSES' CONGRESS.*To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—Your readers, myself amongst the number, are greatly indebted to you for your information with regard to the International Nurses' Congress. I cannot refrain from writing to express my congratulations to all concerned on the splendid programme published by you last week. How one wishes one could be at Buffalo to take part in the great Congress which will result from all this work and organization. But at any rate we are sure of having full accounts of the meetings in the NURSING RECORD, and no doubt we shall also have an opportunity of reading many of the papers presented, through the same medium, and this will be next best to being there in person. I shall look forward also to hearing from the Delegates who have been to Buffalo an account of the proceedings on their return. Some united action for good should result from this unique celebration by Trained Nurses of the New Century.

Thanking you for all your work for the Nursing Profession,

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
A CONSTANT READER.

[This letter was unavoidably held over.—ED.]

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)