



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.

MR. DOUGLAS BRYAN'S SCHEME FOR NURSING ORGANISATION.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—While very much appreciating and agreeing generally with the drift of Dr. Douglas Bryan's letter on the above subject in your issue of Feb. 21st, I see some difficulties in the scheme which he has sketched, both as regards the constitution of the Board and the qualifications required for the training-schools and for the candidates for examination. I am not anxious to throw any obstacles in the way of progress, but before we make a definite move we ought to make sure that each step is in the right direction. First of all, then, with regard to the Board. If we are to be a professional body, we must be self-governing; experience has shown us the inadvisability of allowing outsiders to interfere in the management of our professional concerns, and I trust we may not fall into that error again. I say this out of no animosity or lack of confidence in the medical profession, but let each manage their own affairs—each will have enough to do. If we cannot do this, then we are not yet ready for independence and we must wait till we are. The governing authority, I submit, should consist of Matrons, Sisters, and qualified nurses.

Then as to the examinations.

The two first subjects on Dr. Bryan's plan are, of course, taught in every Major Training-School, but midwifery or monthly nursing does not form any part of the curriculum of even the large training-schools. Gynæcology can be taught in its limited sense, because all hospitals of over 100 beds set aside some wards for this branch of the work, and most nurses get six months at this work.

But a still greater difficulty arises when we study the requirements for the Major Training-Schools. Very few provincial hospitals of 100 beds are permitted to receive and nurse typhoid cases. With the rapid springing up of fever hospitals in every small town has come the transfer of these cases from the wards of the general hospital to those of the special, so that practical training in this branch has become impossible, and if a nurse is disqualified if she has not had practical experience of the nursing of these cases, then the Major Schools, where typhoid patients are still received, will be overwhelmed with applicants for training, and such hospitals as the one I am Matron of (with its 115 beds and two resident Medical Officers) cannot even qualify as a Minor Training-School, because we do not receive typhoid or midwifery cases. Under these rules, it seems to me that only Union Infirmarys could claim to be training-schools, and such schools as St. Bartholomew's, the London, St. Thomas's, and Guy's would be disqualified.

I would suggest that the fitting position of medical men should be that of examiners, so that they may be satisfied of the fitness of the nurses to work under them and carry out their orders, and I think their services should be paid for out of the fees paid by the nurses.

Also the schedule to be filled up before a nurse could present herself for examination should be signed at least by the Resident Medical Officer and the Matron of her training-school. Probably the Chairman of the Board of Management should also be asked for his signature.

I have trespassed enough on your space, dear Madam, for the present, but I was anxious to put before Dr. Bryan and you the points where his scheme presents, to my mind, some difficulties. At the same time, we should all be glad of the co-operation of so broad-minded and generous a man as your correspondent's letter shows him to be.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

H. C. POOLE,

Matron, Blackburn and East Lancashire Infirmary.

NURSING ORGANISATION.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—Mr. Bryan's scheme for nursing organisation is exceedingly interesting as an attempt to formulate a working hypothesis, and to give to the general public some idea of the lines upon which State Registration must be sought. At the foot of the letter you invite criticisms; may I, therefore, venture on a few remarks which I trust may be found useful when the time comes for drawing up the scheme finally in detail? In order to be as brief as possible, I will point out certain alterations and additions which appear to me desirable, rather than enter upon a long criticism of the scheme itself.

Following Mr. Bryan's paper, and leaving "Governing Authority" as laid down, let me suggest that in

Examinations,

instead of his classification of subjects, the following be substituted:—

1. Medical nursing.
2. Surgical nursing.
3. Gynæcological nursing.
4. Midwifery and monthly nursing.
5. Mental nursing.
6. The nursing of infectious diseases.
7. Massage.

All subjects to be taken separately, but a pass certificate to be obtained in 1, 2, and 3 before a nurse can be registered.

Subjects 4, 5, 6, and 7 to be optional, and only taken after the qualification in 1, 2, and 3.

A nurse to be called qualified when holding the certificate for 1, 2, and 3, and further qualifications in special subjects 4, 5, 6, and 7 to be added to the original certificate.

It would be a fatal error to recognise as in any way qualified a nurse holding a certificate for any one branch only, such as monthly nursing. It would at once create an inferior grade of nurse, similar to that contemplated by the L. G. B. The "qualified monthly nurse" must therefore disappear from the scheme.

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