

of doors in these days of surgical cleanliness? If the Bart's nurses do it, I can imagine our surgeons looking on with sorrowful eyes, wondering how they are to be sterilised.

In my experience, I have noticed that nurses are more susceptible to neuralgia and colds than other women workers, which is explained by the fact that their work necessitates their living in a warm and equal temperature and wearing washing dresses, which makes them feel acutely any change of atmosphere away from the wards. With their Home at a distance from their work, more "breakdowns" in health would be inevitable, which would occasion the Matron additional anxiety, and necessitate her keeping a reserve of nurses. Perhaps the Governors are thinking of a subway from the hospital to the Home as a protection against bad weather and dirty streets, and will also arrange the eight-hour system of nursing to compensate for the extra time occupied and fatigue occasioned by living at a distance from their work.

All Bart's nurses will read with interest the Editorial in last week's BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, and will agree with the points so ably brought forward by one who knows. I feel sure many who are holding Matrons' appointments will have remarks to make on the difficulties of organisation and maintaining discipline under the proposed arrangement. Others will think of the numberless little personal inconveniences caused by not having their "room" near at hand, trifles which appear nothing in themselves, yet which cause irritation to the temper; and we all know the discomfort an irritable nurse can be to her patients and all around her.

I feel sure of one thing, and that is, whatever the future arrangements of St. Bartholomew's Hospital are, the nursing staff will be considered in every possible way, for I do not think there is another hospital in England where there is such perfect *esprit de corps* between the Governors and the medical and nursing staffs as there.—Yours faithfully,

JULIA HURLSTON (a Member of  
the League of St. Bartholomew's Nurses).

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing"

DEAR MADAM,—I fully endorse all you say as to the many disadvantages of a Nurses' Home situated at a distance from the hospital. Unless a site can be chosen sufficiently near to be connected with the hospital by a wide subway or covered bridge, it would mean for the nurses much real discomfort and inconvenience, not to mention the appalling loss of time entailed in going to and fro, and in making the necessary change from outdoor to indoor garb.

Our medical staff may be excused for failing to appreciate this latter point until explained to them by those who are initiated. They walk into the wards, place their hats on a table, perhaps remove a great-coat if the weather is cold, and they are ready to commence their round.

Not so rapidly can the unfortunate nurse equip herself for her labours. Custom and expediency have decreed that the nurse shall wear a cap in the ward and a bonnet in the street. Both of these require more than a casual adjustment if neatness is to be regarded. Also the noise of heavy boots and shoes, necessary in wet or muddy weather, could not be tolerated in the wards; they must be replaced by lighter ones. The linen dress, so easily soiled, must be arranged to avoid contact with London's frequent

mud. The shortest time for such an exchange would probably be ten minutes; indeed, if a large number of nurses were congregated together in a common dressing-room (unavoidably impeding each other's progress), at least fifteen minutes would elapse before the nurse could start her work. Half an hour daily would be wasted in useless labour! Multiply this by the number of nurses on the staff, and the fact is revealed that ninety-six hours would be lost to the hospital out of each day, or nearly 700 hours a week. I am really understating the number, I believe, as I have counted only those nurses at work in the wards, without including any on special duty or in the out-patient departments.

Such an arrangement entails on the nurses the compulsory possession of outdoor uniform, does it not? Hitherto, this has not been the case at St. Bartholomew's for ordinary probationers. Would this expense fall on the nurses themselves, or would it be an extra item to be provided by the hospital?

The trouble of twice changing her dress would frequently deter a nurse, whose "off-duty" time is not very long, from visiting her friends. Indirectly, it would undoubtedly tend to narrow the interests of the nurses in anything but their work, a condition of things which all Matrons consider to be a disadvantage.

You touched in your article on the impairment of dainty cleanliness. I would go farther and ask, What of the surgical aspect of the case? Many of us would prefer not to enter an operating theatre in a dress which had been worn in the street, or under a cloak which would not be washed or even cleaned frequently. Are we too particular in this matter? It was our medical staff who taught us to appreciate the existence of microbes.

These are, perhaps, only details; but even details are worth considering before big projects are planned.

Yours faithfully,

AN EX-SISTER AT BART'S.

## Maternity Nurse or Midwife?

We welcome the letter from Miss Amy Hughes which we print in another column, because we agree with her that the question of maternity nursing is one which deserves very full consideration.

If we get back to bed-rock principles the question resolves itself into an educational one, and it is this: Are those who are responsible for the efficiency of nurses satisfied that women are capable maternity nurses if they have received three months' training in *midwifery*, or is it desirable—nay, essential—that they should produce evidence of training in the duties of maternity nursing?

It is true that under the regulations of the Midwives' Board evidence of an elementary experience in the duties of maternity nursing is required, but it cannot be gainsaid that the Board concerns itself primarily with a woman's knowledge as a midwife, not with her nursing qualifications.

There is room, therefore, for the work of an Examining Board which concerns itself primarily with the efficiency of maternity nurses, and this want has now been filled by the British Gynæco-

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