

the poor do appreciate the care of a thoroughly trained nurse, and that it is possible to perform all necessary nursing duties, and that the household work is best performed by the charwoman, who is generally available, and who, as a rule, becomes very handy when she gets used to "nurse's ways." The patient can afford to pay her, as she has no resident nurse to eat her out of house and home, and to further disorganise the already disorganised household by making unusual demands for sleeping accommodation on a normally overcrowded house. Let those who advocate this system try it for a while themselves. I can conceive nothing better calculated to disabuse their minds once and for all of its desirability.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
A PRACTICAL PERSON.

[We refer our readers to the Bickersteth case reported this week. It throws much light on the value of such systems of nursing.—Ed.]

THE DEATH OF NURSE IRVINE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—In your issue of May 7th, a paragraph appears in reference to the death of my sister, Nurse Margaret Irvine, while on duty in South Uist, in which the following words by a writer (whose name is not given) in a local paper appear:—"Surely Mr. Irvine must have unusual ideas when he designates the public school buildings, and the post-office buildings, as filthy hovels. The nurse likely visited an old widow woman who was down with fever, and who kept two or three hens. I know for certain his sister never made the remark," &c. As the above statement is entirely erroneous and beside the mark, would you kindly allow me to put it in its proper setting? First of all, then, I wish to inform your readers that there are no post-office buildings at Daliburgh. The post-office work is carried on in an ordinary dwelling-house, in which the inmates also reside. I, however, did not describe it, or the schoolhouse either, as filthy hovels. I made no reference to them. It was the other houses, in some of which were cows and poultry besides typhoid fever patients, which I referred to. Your contributor appears to be in some doubt as to her duties when he says, "The nurse (likely) visited an old woman," &c. Allow me to inform him that she visited six houses and attended eighteen cases every day. In four instances, because of the want of accommodation, the patients lay two in a bed. In one house alone there were seven cases of fever, and this, too, in a house where cows were kept. My chief complaint, however, was about the accommodation. When my sister took the infection she had to be attended by other two fever patients, one of whom was only eleven days past the crisis, and this was because there was no accommodation for another nurse. The medical officer, Dr. Wilson, sent a letter to the Matron of the Royal Scottish Nursing Institution when she took ill, in which the following sentence appeared:—"As it would be impossible to find accommodation for another nurse, do not send any." He also sent a wire which conveyed the same information, and, of course, none was sent. Your readers will therefore see I had good grounds for complaint. In fairness to me, I hope you will be kind enough to allow me to place the true

aspect of that part of the case which you published before your readers by granting space for the above.

Thanking you in anticipation,

I am, &c.,
JAMES IRVINE
(Late Nurse's brother).

107, Dumbeth Terrace, Coatbridge,

[We sincerely sympathise with Mr. Irvine at the sad death of his sister in South Uist from typhoid fever contracted whilst on duty in the island. In reply to his complaint that she was neglected whilst ill, an investigation took place, and the matter has been widely discussed in Scotland. We are pleased to insert Mr. Irvine's communication.—Ed.]

Comments and Replies.

Nurse P. Lavington.—Unless the lady who sends *Journal* has given address, it will be best for you to notify your change of address to her through its columns.

Miss M. H., Potchefstroom.—Apply to Mr. G. W. Duncan, Secretary, Central Midwives' Board, 6, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, S.W. March 31st, 1905, is the date up to which you can register on your L.O.S. qualification. You should ask for an application form and all particulars, as there are certain formalities which have to be gone through, including, we believe, the production of your L.O.S. certificate.

Staff Nurse.—We quite agree with you as to the scant care bestowed on the mouths of the majority of hospital patients. It may be argued that they are not accustomed at home to the daily use of the toothbrush. Neither are they all accustomed to extensive daily ablutions, but it is recognised as essential to their well-being that these should be performed in hospital. During an illness as much attention should be paid to the cleanliness of the patient's teeth as to the rest of the body. If he is unable to cleanse his mouth himself, it should be mopped round with a swab, or lint on a holder, with some antiseptic.

Staff Nurse.—It is quite impossible to give you adequate instruction through the medium of this paper as to the washing and dressing of infants. This knowledge, as well as the proper method of handling, can only be gained by practice in the actual performance of the work under the supervision of competent teachers.

Notices.

CONTRIBUTIONS.

The Editor will at all times be pleased to consider articles of a suitable nature for insertion in this journal—those on practical nursing are specially invited. The Editor will also be pleased to receive paragraphs, such as items of nursing news, results of nurses' examinations, new appointments, reports of hospital functions, also letters on questions of interest to nurses, and newspapers marked with reports of matters of professional interest. Such communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not necessarily for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W.

OUR PRIZE PUZZLE.

Rules for competing for the Pictorial Puzzle Prize will be found on Advertisement page viii.

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