



## 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.

### OUR GUINEA PRIZE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Many thanks for the cheque for £1 1s. which has been forwarded to me. It was such a pleasant surprise to win the puzzle prize.

Yours sincerely,

MABEL COTTON.

The Royal A. E. Infirmary, Wigan.

### THE POWER OF DISCHARGE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I heartily agree with "A late London Hospital Sister." The committees of hospitals are responsible for the treatment of young women they admit as probationers, and they alone should discharge such workers if they are unsuitable for the work or transgress rules.

Recently this question has been forcibly brought to my notice by a friend who was training in one of the London hospitals.

A colleague, with whom she was friendly, suddenly disappeared. One day she was at dinner; at tea her chair was vacant. She had been summarily discharged by the Matron without time to vindicate herself, and her place knew her no more. Now, the Committee did not meet for several days after this event, so that, as "A late London Hospital Sister" writes, she was "whisked" out of the institution without their knowledge. My friend so strongly objected to a system which made such injustice possible that she resigned, and is now doing well elsewhere. Again, in another London hospital where the Matron has absolute power of discharge, a girl I know asked for a day's leave for her brother's wedding. In this hospital, extra monthly leave is granted. When this nurse went to the Matron for her pass she asked if her monthly holiday might be taken at the same time, and imagine her surprise when the Matron replied, in the most insulting manner, "Certainly; take what holiday you please, and you need not return"! This foolish girl had not the courage to fight the matter, as it is an understood thing that the Committee always support the Matron. I heard lately that the father of a nurse, whom he considers has been most unjustly denied her certificate after nearly three years' work in the same hospital, has threatened to take legal proceedings. All these women may be in the wrong, and the Matron invariably in the right, but I maintain that it is the Committee's duty to investigate accusations against their nurses and see that justice is maintained, and, so long as any one paid officer has absolute power, abuses are sure to exist.

State Registration would do much to protect probationers and nurses, as committees would take more personal interest in the nursing department than they do

at present if public opinion was brought to bear on their management through a Central Board. It is this "closed door" business which is so bad; it places the honourable Matrons in a false position by throwing invidious duties upon them which should be performed by the committee, and places probationers in a false position where the Matron is of a tyrannical disposition.

Yours faithfully,  
A MATRON'S MOTHER.

### FRICITION AT BANBRIDGE INFIRMARY.

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

MADAM,—I have received from your office the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING for July 9th, 1904, and I find my attention directed to a reference it contains to the proceedings at a recent meeting of the Banbridge Board of Guardians, and to an editorial comment thereon. Seeing the wide circulation your organ enjoys, and that considerable importance is attached by your readers to any comment from you, I must protest in the strongest manner against your action in commenting as you have done without making the slightest attempt at investigation, or at finding out what are the true facts and rights of the case. Did it not occur to you that the direct object of sending the report to you might be that such a comment as you have made should be published and circulated to the disadvantage of some person or persons? You appear to take it for granted that to accompany patients in the ambulance is part of the duty of our infirmary nurses, and probably you have little idea of the conditions under which the nurses work here. There are generally over 100 patients in the infirmary, including about twenty children, and the nursing staff consists of a Superintendent, one day nurse for the male side, and one day nurse for the female side, along with a night nurse. There are no paid servants, either cook or attendant. The nurses here are engaged solely to nurse in the infirmary, and, except while taking recreation, are not supposed to leave their wards. In one month recently over forty new patients were admitted. Under such circumstances, how could the nurses be expected not only to attend to the patients in the infirmary, but also to accompany those who are being conveyed to the infirmary from any part of a district covering an area of 125,150 acres, with a population of 42,454? On the other hand, it would appear for an infirmary nurse to go out with the ambulance is actually to infringe the regulations under which she works, and must necessarily involve neglect of the duties she owes to her patients.

As to Mr. Atkinson's statement "that a nurse has endured persecution from her colleagues for her action in going out in the ambulance," I beg to state that it is utterly false and unfounded.

Yours truly,

E. A. JOHNSTON, Superintendent.

The Infirmary, Banbridge, co. Down.

[If Miss E. A. Johnston, Superintendent, conducts her intercourse with the Banbridge Board of Guardians with the lamentable lack of courtesy and good temper which she imagines permissible when addressing the Press, we are not astonished at the friction which apparently exists between the nursing department and the managers of the Banbridge Infirmary, nor that a Guardian should suggest that the

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