

Government Departments is most unjust—and the paragraph in the one-sided contract between the Committee and the probationer ought now to be altered and the nurses placed in a just position. But, as you know, hospital nurses who are not free agents are very diffident about expressing an opinion to those in power. The London is one of the finest hospitals, and one of the best practical nursing-schools in the world. We who have trained there all love and cling to it, but, from a false sense of loyalty, support tacitly an obsolete system. We believe Mr. Holland, the chairman, is our friend, and he can prove it not by always thinking for us, but by encouraging us to think and act for ourselves. Let him prove his *bona fides* by taking the vote of the nurses and probationers on the three years' certificate question *by ballot*. Let each nurse be permitted to vote for or against the following question:—

Are you in favour of a three years' systematic training in the wards of the hospital before certification, and before being eligible to act as a private nurse?

I feel sure the ayes would have it. But voting must be by *ballot*.—Yours truly, A LOYAL LONDONER.

THE INDUSTRIAL CONDITION OF NURSES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I notice that in a recent issue you say that you hope few worthy old nurses after a laborious life will have but a shilling a day on which to provide food, clothing, fire, light, and washing. We shall all share this wish, but, if nurses are so circumstanced, is their position altogether an indictment of the industrial condition of nurses in this country? I am constrained to think it is not.

The majority of nurses who work in hospitals and infirmaries are provided with every comfort, with washing, uniform, medical attendance; they are nursed with no expense to themselves when ill, usually receiving their full salaries during the time they are laid aside; and there are few who could not make some provision for their old age. Private nurses are in even a better position. They earn £2 2s. and £3 3s. a week, besides being maintained while at work, many earning over £100 per annum, so that they cannot have much expense as to maintenance between their cases, and yet what are they better off than the nurse who used to receive a salary of £35 or £40, and let the institution with which she was connected pocket the difference? Very little indeed at the end of the year. I know many private nurses, and it is a fact that in a slack time they are almost penniless at the end of a few weeks, though they may have received two and three guineas a week for *months* previously.

And what have they to show for their money? Some of them—all honour to them—almost support their families on their earnings. But the majority, I believe, could show little but half-worn expensive costumes which they seldom have an opportunity of wearing; a pile of theatre programmes, to remind them that there is scarcely a play in London for which they have not purchased seats, and an impaired digestion reminiscent of certain expensive and unwholesome feasts between meals. The pity of it all is that when nurses live amongst people with plenty of money, as private nurses usually do, they think that they themselves must subsequently live at the same rate. They forget that they are working women, with old age to provide for. What governess is there who would not

think herself well off on an income of £100 per annum? She would maintain herself for three months out of the year in holiday time cheerfully enough, and would put by a considerable portion of her earnings for the time when working days are over. But I believe there are many nurses who earn this amount who have not even seven shillings a week to look forward to in their declining years. It is not in this case the result of wrong industrial conditions, but of want of thrift and foresight.—I am, dear Madam, yours faithfully,
SELF-RESPECT.

DOMESTIC SERVANTS AND NURSES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I am a reader of your paper and would be very pleased if some Matron would tell me the reason that a girl, willing, strong and healthy, cannot enter for a probationer.

I recently tried for a post at L— Infirmery, but I told the *truth*, and said that owing to my father's sudden death I was obliged to go into service. I was educated at the Ladies' High School, and am very anxious to give my life to the profession, not for the *name* but for the love of the work.

I told the Matron exactly how I was placed, but when she knew I was in service, she sent me a letter by the next post to say she did not take anyone out of service. I explained, and told her I would not have been in service had my father lived; but that was no use. I have "honestly," and really tried very hard for three years for post after post, and I always get the same reply, simply because I have no good address and no big person to speak for me; and girls that have a good home, and really do not want to nurse can get in, because they have someone to almost push them in by speaking for them. I should be very pleased if you could do anything to satisfy me by publishing this in your paper so that some Matron may take it up. Surely anyone can quite understand that a persevering girl deserves to succeed.—Yours truly,
A PERSEVERER.

Manchester.

[We publish this letter as requested, but as domestic servants are admitted in many of the training-schools in London and in the country, also in many Poor Law infirmaries, we should advise the writer to try again.—Ed.]

OBSTETRIC TRAINING FOR NURSES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—It was with very great interest and pleasure I read in your last issue that, at last, a general training-school is about to establish maternity wards. I do not wish to place the training opportunities thus afforded in the first place—that must always be accorded to the patients; but surely it is time that if institutions profess to teach, they should take pains to afford a thorough and all-round curriculum. I do not contend that every nurse should be a midwife, but I do say she should during her training have instruction, either in her own hospital, or by arrangement in some other, in how to care for a mother and infant during the lying-in period.

The majority of nurses believe that if they have had three years' experience in medical and surgical nursing they are fully trained. They have a rude awakening when they take up private nursing.

Yours faithfully, OBSTETRIC NURSE.

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