



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.

THE TRAINING OF MIDWIVES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—There is little doubt that "The Matron of a Lying-in Hospital" touches a very sore point in the midwife question when she states that a lengthened training in the wards of the lying-in hospitals will materially decrease their receipts, as the fees are much higher for this special branch of education than are charged by the general hospitals for the same period of time, and very few women desiring to be midwives and maternity Nurses can afford to pay for a lengthened term of training at the present rate. The benefit of further experience will therefore have to be obtained at a cheaper rate, or many necessitous workers will be excluded. I do hope that the medical men who are discussing this great question of the education and registration of Nurses and midwives will not form conclusions without conferring with those most interested, and who have practical experience. I agree with the above-mentioned correspondent that at present but a limited number of three years' trained Nurses will be prepared to act in dull country districts and low town parishes as midwives at minimum fees. This subject needs very free discussion before further action is taken.

Yours truly,
EMILY ANDERSON.

"OUR PIONEERS."

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—A right note was sounded in the "Echoes" last week in the allusion of a correspondent to "the Old Style Nurse," and the spirit of gratitude and reverence by which the letter was inspired, will, I feel sure, be re-echoed in the hearts of many "latter-day Nurses." As a Bart.'s Nurse of some twelve years' standing, and one who received her training in that great school during a period when many of the wards were yet superintended by what is now termed "the old Sisters," I should like to add my testimony to the excellence of the practical training which we obtained under their guidance in times past. The keynote of their management was *cleanliness* and *thrift*—two excellent virtues which the modern Nurse does not invariably possess, and which are the keynotes of successful Hospital management. Soap, sand, soda, the kit brush, with which we waged such unceasing warfare with the wily germ; the tender care of the linen, its systematic mending, airing, folding, and if need be, washing; the preparation and serving of the food—in those days many extras were cooked in the ward kitchens and served piping hot, and the "old Sister" had a very proper respect for the "inner man," and, in consequence, deserved and commanded extreme respect upon the part of the male patients—and last, but not least, the careful personal supervision of the hospital stores, thereby saving the public money. The devotion on the part of "Our Pioneers" for their *alma mater*, and stern appreciation of the privileges of their "position" as official heads of sections—they rendered to "Cæsar" the things that were his, but they never failed (prompted by praiseworthy

self respect) to exact from "Cæsar" their rightful dues—the perfect official harmony of their relations with the "office," the matron, and the staff, and, in return, the confidence reposed in them by those powers by which their individuality (and it was strongly marked), remained intact, permeated the whole institution, and created a "tone" to be envied in many a modern Nursing school. Many anecdotes recur to my memory. Which of my contemporaries has yet forgotten the "bonhomie" and wit of "Sister Faith," the kindly yet absolute way in which she mothered "the juniors" (house staff and the clerks). I well remember one very new house physician asking her "to see by his next visit that tapes were attached to the draw sheets, and so fixed to the mattress," and on the following morning her reply to his question, why his "orders had not been carried out?" "First of all, sir, because the linen is in the Matron's department, and if you wish it included in that of the house physician you must apply to the Treasurer and Almoners, who may think fit to alter your Charge (rules); but considering that your predecessor desired that the draw sheets should be buttoned to the mattress, and as it is not improbable that your successor will *prefer ceiling wax*, I ain't going to have 'em altered in my ward."

This clenched the matter, and cemented a warm friendship.

Yours,
"AN OLD-STYLE NURSE."

ASSOCIATION OF ASYLUM WORKERS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—At last the public is awake to the fact that something must be done to raise the standard of Nurses in our Asylums, and the next meeting of the Association for the purpose is anxiously awaited by all Nurses whose hearts are in their work.

The difficulties to be met by the Committee are great, and many years will elapse before the Nursing Staff of Asylums will be on the same footing as our Hospitals, but compare Hospital Nursing as it was fifty—nay, twenty—years or less ago with what it is now, and Asylum Nurses need have no fear but that before long they will rank with our Hospital Nurses. What is wanted to make this movement a success is, to my mind, the hearty co-operation of all Asylum workers—not only Nurses, medical officers, &c., but of the Commissioners in Lunacy themselves.

The Commissioners as a body are held in a little awe by Asylum workers; they have a knack of finding out so many discrepancies, that it must be acknowledged that without them to countenance the proceedings, the Association will be a failure, especially as they at least are doing all they can to improve the tone of Asylum Nurses, and I believe I am correct in stating that one of them was the first medical officer to introduce women of higher culture than the ordinary attendant into his Asylum. They, I am inclined to think, must be consulted first, and I am sure they will be willing to help the work on.

At present very little has been done in the movement, and the names of the Board of Management are not published, therefore the Commissioners in Lunacy may head the list, I only express my feelings on the subject. The Medico-Psychological Association has done, and is doing, much to help Nurses to be better trained.

Also many Medical Superintendents in our Asylums have found that good training is essential, and for some years past the Nursing Staff has been greatly improved. Still at present, with the public, Asylum workers rank "nowhere" in their estimation—there are "Asylum Attendants" and "Hospital Nurses." Why? Surely the insane need *nursing*. They are diseased, they are mentally ill, and need a Nurse quite as much as any Hospital patient.

Having been a Hospital Nurse, and being now an Asylum attendant, I think I am in a position to state my views on both sides, and I do most earnestly argue that it is more necessary that women of higher education should

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