

MADAM,—That there is room for improvement in the present system of Nurse-training, no one seems to deny. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to where the chief flaws lie. I think that "An Old London Hospital Sister" has touched a most important point, in denouncing the prominence of what might be called the scientific side of Nursing at the commencement of a Probationer's life in Hospital. Surely it is responsibility that requires the knowledge which theoretical training gives. Obedience is a Nurse's first duty, but *blind* obedience is sufficient for a first year's Probationer. Where reference to trained intelligence is obligatory, the power of discrimination, and the use of individual judgment is not necessary, or even desirable. The whole energies of mind and body may best be spent on actually "tending" the sick. Intelligent obedience can advantageously wait for its development, it seems to me, till a later stage of a Nurse's life. Nerve exhaustion may undoubtedly be produced by overtaxing either bodily or mental power. In Hospital life, especially at first, nerve strain must necessarily be experienced by both classes of Probationers, increased, as things now are, by unwonted bodily exertion in the one case, and in the other by overburdening the brain, unaccustomed to intellectual work. The balance might be struck by allowing educated brains to lie fallow for a time on the one hand, the limited intelligence on the other being left to awaken gradually. As regards the payment, or non-payment, for training, could not both classes of Probationers alike pay a premium of say £10 for the first year? possibly giving their services for the second? Personally, I feel most strongly that it is far better, and that the training is more thorough, if no distinction is made in the work of Probationer Nurses, no matter to what class they belong. As Nursing Homes are now arranged, where things are well organized, the expenses would fall very heavily on the Hospital if *no* payments were being received. A small sum paid by every Nurse would, in the aggregate, amount to nearly as much as the fees of the "Guineas," especially if no salary were given to either class the second year. The vexed question of length of training opens up another point. In the case of solicitors, those who have been at one of the Universities are only required to be articled for two years instead of three. Could just such a difference be made in the time of training between "lady," or preferably "educated" Nurses and the other class? In the one case, two years, and in the other, three, being the original time to qualify them for certificates as fully-trained Nurses. Education has quickened the perceptions, and social intercourse has brightened the wits of women who have mixed in good society. They take in new ideas more quickly than others, and the tact that contact with the world gives, enables them to accommodate themselves to circumstances, and renders them more adaptive. A preliminary examination, as a test of eligibility for only two years' training might possibly be devised.—Faithfully yours,

MARIAN C. PINCOFFS.

*Registered Nurse, late Sister-in-Charge
Home Hospital, Minehead.*

One of our most experienced and progressive Matrons writes :—Should Probationers pay for training? If so, how much? The question appears simple, but is a complex one. Many confine the word training to the time spent in the wards. If this is all that is meant by training, I think it should not be paid for; but any special technical instruction required, should, I think, be acquired at the would-be Probationer's own expense. There is no profession or trade (with the exception of Nursing) which does not require special technical instruction, and this instruction has to be obtained at the cost of the individual. Midwifery Nursing has always had its special instruction with attendant expense. It is only of recent years that any special technical instruction has been considered necessary for general Nursing, and the difficulty appears to be in arriving at any definite conclusion as to the nature and extent of that instruction. It has been proved, by experience, that it is not practicable to give class instruction to Probationers simultaneously with the acquiring of the practice of Nursing in the wards. Directly or indirectly, many Hospitals ask payment of their Probationers either by the Guinea per week, or by giving no payment for the first year, and offering very small sums for the year or two following. The restriction of Probationers' age to 24 or 25 years before commencing their training has complicated matters, as many have found it necessary to go to some expense to fit themselves for other occupations, while waiting to arrive at that age, and have naturally found it a hardship to incur a second expense.

MADAM,—I have been much interested in reading the able letters which have appeared concerning the question of Nurses paying for their training, and I humbly suggest that the question could easily be put to the test, if that training were defined. Upon inquiry, I find many women are paying £105 for training at one of our largest London Hospitals, for a period of two years, and have to supply themselves with the greater part of their uniform and washing. For this sum they receive no privileges—if being exempted from the routine work of the ward can be termed a privilege. Now if this sum is forthcoming for no definite return, it appears to me that half the sum would be willingly paid for a thorough and definite training, including, of course, systematic, practical, and theoretical teaching. What I find the majority of educated women object to, in our present arrangement, is the lack of a definite curriculum of study. The Lectures are given at the end of a hard day's work, when the brain is weary and unreceptive; and the practical instruction is picked up at the pleasure of Sister and Staff Nurse, both oftentimes far too busy with their own responsible duties to have much time to teach Probationers. I shall look forward with pleasure to the letters on the five important questions to come.—Yours,
"A YOUNG MATRON."

[Miss Edith Mawe should have been described in signing her letter as *late* Matron to the Dunedin Hospital. We regret the printer's error.—ED.]

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