

fort of the sick, is held in view and attained thereby. Let the new Probationer sweep, dust, polish, cook, sew, and care for the linen; let her be taught that such work is eminently useful, healthy and *necessary* if she is ever to attain to the very highest and most responsible posts in her profession; and let her ever after, when she comes to have individual care of sick persons, recognise the value of such work, as any theoretical training is absolutely useless without the instinct and practice of cleanliness. "An Old-fashioned Matron" also uses the word *sobriety*—I gather in its widest sense—sobriety of mind, evidenced in garments, style, expression. Such sobriety is out of date. Are we to blame the Nurse of the nineties that she is human as other women are? In the last ten years, Englishwomen of all classes have become rapidly vulgar—the young Probationer brings the taint from her home circle. It must be firmly discouraged in our Hospitals, but the blame is not primarily found there. Gabble and ostentation—a general tendency to "peacock," a spreading out of gaudy feathers with much screeching—have permeated all classes of persons, male and female, during the last decade, and it is impossible that our young women could escape the taint—Domesticity again. Let us go to the root of the matter and clamour for a simpler and purer *home influence* for our daughters; there would then be less complaints abroad concerning superficial Nurses. "A Modern Matron" is quite right in her claim for "self-discipline." It is the only manner in which human nature can be kept in control, and which produces the solidarity of character which has hitherto been the great compelling force of our nation, and, in fact, the secret of the success of all the world's great nations. Mrs. Strong's Paper has set us all thinking (and some few, writing, E.D.). Let us hope it will inspire us to act.—Yours truly,

"A MODERATE MATRON."

#### MATRONS UNDER THE POOR LAW.

MADAM,—Every Matron of a Poor Law Infirmary who has the benefit of reading your paper must rejoice (no doubt, silently) in your able editorial of the 24th inst., *re* "The Lewisham Infirmary," and also be grateful to Miss Pattison and Miss Mollet for publicly attacking the great blot in Local Government Management in attempting to nurse our sick paupers efficiently by women (many of them very ill educated) placed under the absolute control of young medical men, usually very inexperienced in the knowledge of the broader issues of life, and, therefore, doubly incapable of occupying such a responsible position for the best interest of the community. I have some personal experience of the work of a Matron in a Poor Law Infirmary, and I do not hesitate to say that it is a demoralising position for an upright, conscientious woman to hold, for, according to the law, it is impossible for her to do her duty, and, unless the Matron is accorded powers to enforce discipline, Nurses trained in our Poor Law Infirmaries can never attain to the high standard in force in our General Hospitals. Imagine the House Physicians at Bartholomew's, Guy's, or St. Thomas's empowered to sign passes on and off duty for the Nursing staff; imagine the Matron of these institutions daily forwarding to these young gentlemen a report concerning the scrubbers—if late in at the gate, etc.; and then imagine the "tone" in these great institutions. The truth is that the whole

system of internal government in our Poor Law Infirmarys is a remnant of barbarism, and until it is changed by law to coincide with modern methods, there is little hope of improvement either in the *personnel* or nursing of our sick paupers, and we shall continue to be shocked week by week in the public Press by reports of Nursing atrocities. No reform is possible until it is recognised that the domestic department belongs to the Matron subject to the Guardians, and for medical treatment only to the Medical Superintendent. This system is now in vogue in our best County Hospitals and works successfully. Why should it not be inaugurated in our Poor Law Infirmarys? The note of revolt has been sounded by Miss Pattison. Her colleagues should loyally support her in her demands by communicating with the Local Government Board.

"LATE POOR LAW MATRON."

MADAM,—Your article on the Lewisham Infirmary calls attention to a matter of some moment, and it is to be hoped that sooner or later steps may be taken to minimise the difficulties that now occur in the management of Poor Law Infirmarys. We must not, however, forget that the pauper help still exists, and that the untrained Matron is to be found in country unions, especially where there is a small number of sick to be provided for; and under her absolute control the position of the trained Nurse is not enviable. Moreover, there is a possibility of errors of judgment or of manner on the part of the Matron as well as on that of the Medical Officer, and an injudicious Matron can even now render her Nurses exceedingly uncomfortable. The problem of government under two heads, whose departments are closely intermingled, must, in any case, be one of great difficulty and, perhaps, the only satisfactory solution lies in the careful selection of officials possessed of tact, good temper and what I may call co-operative ability.

"A GUARDIAN."

### Nurses of Note.

MISS G. M. THOROLD,

*Lady Superintendent of the Middlesex Hospital.*

"OTHER things being equal, in most relations of life I prefer a man of family," wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes, ". . . the man that inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of, at least, four or five generations . . . the man with the gallery of family portraits against the one with the twenty-five cent. daguerreotype, unless I find out that the last is the better of the two." Miss Thorold can claim the advantage which had such weight with the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table as with many other shrewd observers, for she comes of an old Lincolnshire family, and is nearly related to the well-known Dr. Thorold, the Bishop of Winchester. Her father, the late Rev. William Thorold, and the Bishop were first cousins, both being the grand-children of Sir John Thorold, the ninth baronet of that ancient family, who for many years represented the county of Lincoln in Parliament. Miss Thorold, however, was born, not in Tennysonland, but in North Devon, in a district associated with Kingsley's "Westward Ho." The eldest of a family of

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)