

the public in an unqualified protest against the issue of a list of Nurses founded upon no standard of training or efficiency whatever, and merely as a commercial speculation. A very enthusiastic meeting would be the result.

I am, Madam, your obedient servant,
C. BELAYSE MYERS.

THE PERFECTIONS OF A NURSE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I suppose the readers of the NURSING RECORD must be aware that the qualifications required in a typical Nurse are various and manifold. After a careful perusal of all the standard books on Sick-Nursing, I am struck with the fact that it is invariably laid down that the would-be Nurse must begin by stripping herself of any foibles or weaknesses she may possess, as well as the graver faults that beset humanity. She must then, forthwith, arm herself with all the cardinal and Christian virtues.

Well and good. Personally I believe a large number of the profession do shrive themselves of their mortal sins, and strive after an ideal. But is it not a little hard that it should be taken so much for granted? A little hard, I mean, on the average woman, who in due time would make an average Nurse, to nurse average people, who are, by the bye, in an overwhelming majority over the exceptional patient who would feel at home with the saint Nurse.

A good deal is asked from the probationary and staff Nurses, but the point they must reach is far out-topped by the lofty eminence required in a Sister or Matron. Celibacy and poverty—virtues that the Catholic Church has declared to be the most difficult of attainment—are a *sine quâ non*, and all other Christian virtues are expected to follow in regular sequence.

Now I should be sorry to see the standard of the Nursing profession in any way lowered, and it is good for the novice to feel she has a height to reach. But with regard to the Matron I cannot help thinking there should be some relaxation in the demands on her multiform attainments.

I think some compromise might be arrived at. To take a simple example. If a hospital Committee requires that their Matron "should speak Welsh," something might be taken off in the way of Christian forbearance, or meekness under oppression, or some other such point that the aspirant for the post finds a difficulty. Another Matron is expected "to hold Evangelical views and to be able to dispense." I am not sure what Evangelical views may be, but dispensing does not come into the everyday training of a Nurse, it is a sort of "extra," like speaking Welsh, and I think might be allowed for in the bond. Another Matron is required to be "domesticated and able to train probationers." I do not know what "domesticated" means; it sounds like Goldsmith's Natural History, and I am afraid the up-to-date Nurse would rebel against being trained by a woman who was "domesticated." I think in the circumstances such a Matron might be allowed compensation—say in the limitation of patience, or of energy—both favourite qualifications in the Nurse.

But to come to the point that started me writing. I have before me a list of the qualifications and duties to be endorsed by the applicant for the post of Matron to a hospital that I think I may describe as select. In this it is set forth that after fulfilling the customary demands of personal perfection, "the Matron must be a vegetarian and total abstainer, or at least be willing to abstain from flesh foods and alcohol within the walls of the hospital." It is some concession, certainly, that the Matron may revel in carnivorous banquets and the drinking of strong wine, if it so please her, outside the hospital, but within its walls she must abstain, and she must, so the form goes on to state, "see that the Nurses and servants also vegetate."

Now I do not think it would be an easy matter, nor part

of the Matron's usual duties, to enforce a new verb on the Nurses and servants under her control, and I think in consideration of the effort her standard of perfection might be dealt with leniently. This particular hospital makes no pretence to alleviate her "poverty," the salary offered is modest, not to say mean, but it increases after the first year if, as the form naively remarks, "she should be retained so long."

So here is a case in point where celibacy, poverty, obedience and fasting are enforced on the Matron as preliminary virtues, and no hope is held out that any imperfection will be overlooked (except an occasional lapse in the privacy of home from a Pythagorean diet). I believe the post is still open, I am sure it is *bond fide*, and it is only by accident that one of the rules mentions "that the Matron will enter on her duties on or about April 1."

I am, yours sincerely,
H. K.

AN ADDITION TO THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES FOR NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM.—I am very glad that your correspondent called attention, under the above heading, to the system of catechising Nurses which has crept of late into many text-books which are written ostensibly to be of assistance to professional women in the practice of their art, but which, in many particulars, might be mistaken for "Handbooks for Penitentiaries," or tracts for the reformation of "a submerged tenth" of the Nursing profession. I append a few extracts from the same book, a part of which has already reaped a harvest of condemnation from your previous correspondent.

The author of the book, a qualified M.D., must have been living in the "wilds" for the past twenty years, or he would surely not deem it necessary to include in his catechism minute instructions as to the personal habits, the cleanliness of linen, the brushing of the teeth, &c., of the Trained Nurse—instructions which are as indelicate as they are insulting.

Rule 10 enacts that a Nurse must be always modest in mind and speech, but never *prudish*.

Q. What should be avoided in the Nurse's dress?

A. Extra frills and adornments.

Q. How ought a Nurse to dress?

A. Neatly and plainly. A cap of clean white clear muslin preserves the hair from dust, and gives the Nurse a pleasant appearance. The apron should be made of strong white calico! (the note of admiration is mine).

Q. What rules should be observed by the Nurse for the regulation of her own health?

A long list of rules is appended. I give only a few choice extracts:—

"She should eat slowly and carefully."

"The whole surface of the body should be well washed once in the twenty-four hours; cold water is the best to use."

"A warm soap bath should be taken once a week."

"The hair should be kept well brushed."

"The teeth must be carefully washed."

"She must never use the patient's towel," and so on *ad nauseam*.

I wonder what would be the comment of this medical author were a Nurse to write a little handbook containing toilet regulations for the members of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, with hints as to whether their hair should be parted in the centre or at the side; a few suggestions as to the best kind of necktie; and the latest information as to the most desirable method of arranging moustache and beard.

We think the gentleman would resent the suggestions as strongly as we resent his.

A NURSE
(AND NOT AN INMATE OF A REFORMATORY).

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