

Nursing Echoes.

* * All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.



IN the following letter we find food for reflection, and we fear the accusation that the latter-day Nurses do not sufficiently appreciate "our pioneers" is but too true. The suggestion that our readers should contribute personal reminiscences of those great women who preceded us in the work of nursing the sick, with whom

they have trained, is one with which we heartily sympathise, and we hope our readers will contribute some of their "memories" to our pages.

* * *

"Your note of last week *re* 'The Old Style Nurse' and her intuitive knowledge of disease, brings back to me many happy, helpful memories of my probationer days—now many years past. I had the rare good fortune to spend some months of that delightful time in what was known as 'Bullock's Tent' at Manchester. This wooden so-called tent was a temporary building erected during an epidemic in that city, and found so useful, that it was retained in the grounds of the Royal Infirmary for many years. It was a long, many-windowed, wooden building, consisting of two long wards, each containing 30 beds, for male surgical cases, on either side of a central block containing Sisters' room, the ward kitchen, scullery and operating theatre.

* * *

How vividly the overpowering individuality of the then Sister of these wards is imprinted on my memory; her massive head and fine open countenance, the strong kindly features, her keen eye, and square, uncompromising muscular figure—'down right,' 'anti-humbug,' indeed all the characteristics of the 'red-rose' were stamped with indelible distinctness on her outward person.

* * *

Her first words of greeting, 'Well! have you come to work or play?' her scorching, comprehensive glance which took in my *tout ensemble*—the highly gophered cap, fine white linen apron, glazed cuffs and collar—and seemed to burn a hole through the obtrusively starched gown, and there discover my vanity of vanities, dainty French kid, beaded shoes and clocked stockings. (Oh, for clogs and homespun!)

(This was in the days when Nurses wore bibless pinafores, ample 'leg of mutton' sleeves, gathered into a neat, starchless wrist band, and unassuming net head-gear, beloved of weary laundress.) Luckily for me, however, this penetrating glance searched yet deeper than silken hose, and presumably discovered a satisfactory answer to the question, otherwise why should I have become so deeply the debtor of this remarkable woman?

* * *

With what patience and diligence, with what kindness and *love* she took me to herself and gave unstintingly of her extraordinary knowledge; her power of organisation (rare gift) was extreme, a veritable *code Napoleon* regulated the routine of work in the ward under her charge, upon which has been based, I am thankful to say, the ward routine of many Hospitals. How little do we recognise the vitality of one grain of seed!

* * *

'Good old days,' which we modern Nurses are far too apt to sweep unceremoniously aside with but a cursory glance at the great lessons which we might gather therefrom—lessons in untiring devotion to duty (according to lights), abstemious self-restraint and *self-conquest*, days which ground out, a decade ago, a stamp of Nurse that I fear will never be produced by our present *fanfaron* system of training.

* * *

It was indeed the age of individuality, and I am of opinion that your paper would be doing good service to the probationers of to-day if you could produce for them some slight sketches or reminiscences of our great pioneers in the field of Nursing, who I regret to notice are too often all classed under the one caricaturing and defamatory head of 'Gamp.'

* * *

This is a deplorable trait in our woman's character, this foolish depreciation of heroic service on the part of the women of a past generation, many of whom lived noble lives which it would be well for us to emulate. It is time we Nurses had our heroines to keep our latter-day pride in check.

* * *

May I suggest that your readers should contribute from their own experience—their personal reminiscences of the great characters with whom they have come in contact during their period of Hospital work? These "noble lives" must be numerous to judge from my own experience, and they should be rescued from oblivion. Did not twenty or more noble women accompany Miss Nightingale to the Crimea? Is there a Nurse amongst us who can voice their names?

* * *

A MATRON of a Lying-in Hospital writes:—

"I read your admirable paper every week with great interest, but differ with your views on the training and Registration of Midwives. In theory your views may appear quite possible, but when you come to practice,

NURSES' WATCHES ALTERED to show SECONDS, from 8s. 6d. This includes new seconds' dial and seconds' hand, and the necessary mechanical alterations. Nurses' Silver Keyless Watches with seconds' hand, £2 ros. **SAMUEL STANLEY, 48, MORTIMER STREET, W.** (Midway between Middlesex Hospital and Cavendish Square.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)