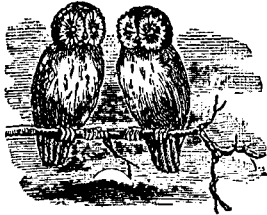


## Matrons in Council.

### NURSING EDUCATION.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."



DEAR MADAM,—I greatly regret that I was unable to be present at the Conference of the Matrons' Council, at which Miss Isla Stewart read her paper on "A Uniform Curriculum of Education for Nurses," and presented to us the opinions of so many experienced

leaders and teachers of nursing, but as I find it so much easier to express my views on paper than *viva voce*, you will perhaps grant me space in the RECORD for a few remarks. It appears to me that we have now reached an important epoch in nursing affairs, and that our best schools are somewhat at a standstill. The question we Matrons must ask ourselves is: Is the present system of Nurse education the best that can be given? And if we cannot answer the question in the affirmative we have got to make it better. Then comes the question, How? The answer to that is, Where does it fail? And that brings us to the root of the matter; we must recognise our deficiencies, and in the numerous chaotic systems, or lack of system, to which our Nurses are exposed in their attempt to receive an efficient education, we shall find that answer. There is no doubt that the time has arrived when a definite minimum curriculum must be defined by the Superintendents of our Training Schools, through which every Nurse must pass satisfactorily before she can claim to be a *trained* Nurse. It is quite useless to assume that the present condition of things can last, because we know that it is unsatisfactory. Every one is dissatisfied—Patients, Doctors, Matrons, Sisters and Nurses. The former, both in Hospitals and privately, are largely exposed to the care of the half-trained Nurse. Medical men have difficulty in obtaining the services of a Nurse sufficiently efficient to know her place; Matrons are keenly alive to the defects of our present arrangements; the Sisters are worn out with the worry of working into shape so much raw material; and the Probationers themselves are disheartened with the fact that they are expected to know practical nursing by instinct, and at the same time attend classes and study for examinations, and thus acquire but a smattering of nursing, both in theory and practice, or leave the Hospital as hopeless failures, to swell the ranks of private Nurses hiring themselves out on the sweating system to the horrible little nurse farms which have sprung up like fungi all over the West end of London and in many provincial places. Indeed, there is stern necessity for reform, and there is little doubt from the dispassionate and able manner in which the subject has been approached by the Matrons' Council, that a solution of our difficulties will be found. So many interests are deeply involved in this great question of Nurse education, that it requires all the combined wisdom and conscientious consideration which can be devoted to it to evolve a satisfactory system. I hope all those Matrons who have the best good of Nurses and patients at heart will devote thought to this important

subject, and cling tenaciously to the necessity when choosing women for nursing work to take those possessed first of all of the true spirit of nursing, whatever their other qualities may be. We have strayed far afield from the old beautiful virtues of self-sacrifice and devotion to the sick in these latter days, and we shall do badly in the future if our work be not founded "on a rock."

Yours faithfully,  
SUPERINTENDENT.

## Home Hospitals.

ANGELS, VAMPIRES, AND MOTHER NATURE.

(Continued from page 390.)

WE practical Nurses have of late years become a wee bit weary of the "ideals" to which the general public expect us to attain, because, should we develop into the very angelic beings which the penny-a-line journalist and the professional philanthropist depict us, we should be eminently unsuited to remain longer in this delightful, yet very imperfect, sphere, or to deal justly and successfully with our very imperfect patients. It is the age of neurosis and egotism, and with much encouragement the majority of sick humanity has developed the absorbing propensity of the vampire. Their appetite is rapacious, and they have a capacity for "gobbling up" the angelic Nurse without further ado. One patient will keep a Nurse on the trot all day long, and if an operation has to be undergone, it is no uncommon thing for the surgeon to encourage the patient to keep her out of bed all night as well. This is the process by which the human neurotic vampire absorbs the vitality of the "angelic Nurse." Reading aloud, rubbing limbs, fanning face, damping the fevered brow, *nourishment!* Move to right, move to left, too hot, too cold, *nourishment!* Head too high, head too low, sinking, more *nourishment!* Too light, too dark, in agonies, send for the doctor—and, again, *nourishment!* The "angelic Nurse" is sweet, obeys instead of controls her patient, takes little or no rest, little or no fresh air, and naturally has little or no appetite. Day by day she gives of her vital energy to feed the "vampire," and in her turn breaks down in health and develops the absorbing propensity, and lives on the "angelic" friend or relation.

Now this is not Nursing, and no treatment which is not scientific and salutary, because it is wholesome and practical, will ever be really efficacious. The care of the sick should be organised, and good discipline enforced, if the best results are to be obtained. For the good management of a Home Hospital, and well-being of patient and Nurse, rules and regulations must be drawn up and enforced; we must have willing obedience and punctuality. Strict Nursing uniform must be worn both by day and night Nurses (I have been horrified by finding a night Nurse on duty capless and in her dressing-gown: this is distinctly unprofessional and quite unnecessary when the Nurse is on regular night duty; the angelic Nurse flitting between night and day duty naturally becomes a little careless as to mere garments) and it is not permissible for a Nurse to enter the sick room in outdoor garb or uniform.

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