



Letters to the Editor.

(Notes, Queries, &c.)

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

SISTERS' SITTING-ROOMS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I should like to add my opinion upon the question of Nurses' sitting-rooms, having held the position of "Sister" in two of the largest London Hospitals. I always felt what an immense relief of mind and body it was to be able to retire to my own little room, if only for a few minutes at a time.

I am very strongly of opinion that rooms should be provided for the Sisters near their wards, and a sleeping-room in the Nurses' Home, or as far as possible from their patients, thus allowing them to have an uninterrupted night's rest; they will then be able to begin their daily work with renewed energy and vigour.

I think it most desirable that a Sister, when on duty, should always be within call, if her subordinates require her instructions, but I do not think it needful or necessary for a Sister to sit always in her ward after her actual work is done, and everything is in readiness for the visit of the staff in the afternoon. And there are very many things, as the late Sister Mellish points out, that are better done in the Sisters' room, such as writing the night report for the night Sister's guidance, hearing the reports from day and night Nurses when going off duty, writing patients' diet sheets, laundry and store lists, &c.

When a Sister is off duty, she then has her own little room to retire to, which is her very own to beautify and make as pleasant and home-like as possible. I never felt I was unnecessarily called by my Nurses, though I always let them understand I was willing to come if they thought it desirable; and I can safely say they never abused the privilege.

I am of opinion that the same rules are applicable to provincial or county Hospitals of 100 beds or more.

Apologising for the length of this letter, which I had hoped to send last week,

I am, dear Madam, yours truly,

C. M. BEACHCROFT,

Matron and Supt. of Nursing (late Sister at the London and St. Bartholomew's Hospitals).
County Hospital, Lincoln, Nov. 30th, 1895.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I have been much interested in reading the letters *re* Sisters' sitting rooms, and quite agree with what "Sister Mellish" says, as to the necessity of having one, though the bedroom would be better, in my opinion, away from the wards, in order that the Sister may forget all anxiety and responsibility, when she ought to be thinking of rest and repose. She can never really be "off duty" if her bedroom is attached to the ward. A Sister who is suitable for her post ought to receive every convenience and consideration possible, and I think it is better for her Staff Nurse to feel she is responsible to a very great extent for the patients, especially during the Sister's temporary absence.

Very faithfully yours,

MIRIAM RIDLEY,

Matron, Hospital for Epilepsy and Paralysis,
Regent's Park.
November 30th, 1895.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—As a Sister of many years' standing, I am glad to observe that the tendency of last week's correspondence concerning Sisters' sitting rooms, is certainly in favour that they should be provided. I am strongly of opinion that there should be a room off each ward to which a Sister can retire for rest, and also to perform her clerical duties, and in which to hold the necessary private interviews with Nurses, doctors, or patients' friends—these are occasions upon which privacy is very desirable. "J. L. Coulton," for many years a Sister of the London Hospital, approves of the Sister having both bed and sitting rooms off the ward, and heartily as I agree with the provision of the sitting room, I disagree with her that it is the best plan for a Sister to sleep off her ward. It is impossible that the air should be healthy, or that quiet can always be obtained. The most modern and best arrangements appear to me to be, that each Sister should have a bedroom in the Nursing Home, and that a dining room should also be there provided, in which wholesome meals should be punctually provided for all members of the Nursing Staff. It is conducive to discipline and good health, as one knows from experience how little Hospital Sisters usually consider their meals, when provided by the ward maid, and eaten alone, non-nourishing food, little varied, and hastily swallowed, soon makes a Sister "peaky" and nervous, and often unfits her for performing her duties with that perfect self-control which is so necessary. Therefore, let the Sisters be provided with a day room off the ward, an airy bedroom in the Home, and the best of simple nourishing food, if they are to fulfil the high ideal of living, which is expected of them by doctors, nurses, and patients. This system prevails in this institution and works admirably.

A COUNTRY HOSPITAL SISTER.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I hope every Sister who values the one little touch of "home life" which remains to her in Hospital work, namely, her own sitting room, will send you a few lines to protest against the suggestion that the Sister of a ward would be better without it. As a Sister in a large London Hospital, and otherwise a homeless woman, it appears to me a most cruel suggestion, and one which I feel sure never emanated from a sympathetic Matron. My little room is my one priceless possession, not that I spend much time in it, but it is here are to be found all my little treasures brought from home, my books, my father's chair, portraits of those I love, and from whom I am separated. In fact, it is within this little space of nine feet square, that a Hospital Sister realises that she is human, and not a machine or peripatetic inkstand. Close the door and nature resumes her sway. Bah! what a relief, to sit down, to remove one's cap, to cast oneself full length upon a couch, to slip off one's shoes, and cool one's poor feet, the veins of which are horribly congested with a two hours' "wait" on a physician, to enjoy the ease of relaxed facial muscles, and look ugly if one is cross, in fact, to collapse; are not these all simple joys well known to the best Hospital Sisters? and are they not just the privileges which make life in that responsible and laborious position possible for any length of time? What therefore are we prepared to do to that architect who, knowing nothing of us or our lives, proposes to deprive us of our sitting rooms, in constructing the model Hospital of the future? May it be his fate to be *warded in my ward!* But joking apart, the truth is that within the last twelve years, numbers of Hospitals have been built or added to, and with very few exceptions they have been constructed without

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