

WOMEN AS INFIRMARY MANAGERS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—With regard to what has been said by your correspondents as to the work women have done on Boards of Guardians, I should like to say from my own personal experience that the first step women take on being appointed on Hospital and Infirmary Boards is to set about increasing the comforts of the patients. In one Workhouse Infirmary of which I was Matron there had never been one comfortable easy chair provided for the aged and infirm or the convalescents. Our first lady Guardian at once thought of it and took measures to have at least one in every ward. And she is trying to increase the number, as well as, in several other instances, to make the lives of these unfortunate paupers as comfortable and bearable as possible.

Truly yours,
AN INFIRMARY MATRON.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I rejoice to see that conservative Edinburgh has at last yielded to the progression of the times in the election of Miss Stevenson as one of the managers of the Infirmary. There has been far too much masculine legislation in charitable Institutions, and it appears to me from the conditions prevailing in a large number of our Orphan Asylums, Workhouses, Industrial Schools, and other such Institutions—conditions which are really fifty years behind the times—that men have shown their incapacity to manage such places unaided by the valuable domestic qualities which women possess. There can be no question that women have some totally different faculties from men—and it can hardly be denied that these faculties should be represented and have full scope in all social questions. As an evidence of the utter incapacity of men to deal with the women and children in our public Institutions, I may mention that in a Workhouse in which I am interested, a Board of men Guardians recently decided that the women and children inmates were to be allowed neither vests nor drawers in their winter outfits! If there had been any women Guardians, so brutal and barbarous a suggestion could never have been passed. From the point of view of decency it is absolutely intolerable, and from the standpoint of hygiene it is preposterous. The amount of disease this monstrous edict will engender is incalculable. Isn't it about time—as a newspaper recently asked—that we had a little more "petticoat government" in the world?

Yours truly,
MAY S. LAWSON.

Edinburgh.

LIMITATIONS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—From paragraphs in the medical press, there appears to me a tendency just at present to "hark back" in Nursing matters to the attitude assumed in the seventies. Those like myself who have been Nursing for twenty years will remember the somewhat timorous tone of the medical press when educated women first began in numbers (and therefore to make their influence felt) to train as Nurses. Who will ever forget the "convulsion" of Guy's Hospital in

'79 and '80 when the old order of things passed away to make room for the new, or indeed the turmoil into which effecting most necessary reform in Nursing matters plunged the majority of our older Hospitals about the same period? There are still those amongst us who could "a tale unfold" concerning the terrible suffering of the patients in those Institutions before the advent of the "new Nurse"—or at least the "new Matron"—and what a martyrdom many of these pioneer Matrons suffered in performing conscientiously their thankless task—all the while subjected to a strong current of adverse criticism upon the part of the medical press.

Now surely the old bogie, the "lady Nurse," is not to be resuscitated because the natural and inevitable law of progress must continue. Nursing to-day is by no means a perfected art, and all thoughtful persons will own that the education of our Nurses, in the large majority of Hospitals, leaves much to desire. Is it reasonable, therefore, for any class of the community to adopt the attitude of attempting to dam the onflowing tide of progress? It appears to me as unwise as it is futile. Are the sciences of medicine and surgery at a standstill? Certainly not; never have they advanced for the benefit of humanity with such sure and rapid strides. Is it possible that the gentle and absolutely necessary "hand maiden," Nursing, can linger in the rear, and dutifully perform her part? She cannot. Therefore, she must be educated upon progressive lines. This is acknowledged and proved by the institution of a preliminary educational course for pupils—demanded by the authorities of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, the London Hospital and others. It is the folly of a policy of obstruction—instead of that of judicious guidance—which is bringing the Royal British Nurses' Association into acute collision with the more thoughtful and liberal-minded of its members, and it is to be hoped for the prestige of that Society that this impossible attitude will be speedily abandoned.

Yours sincerely,
SARAH ALLEN.

AGE LIMITS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—A correspondent under the name of "Auto," writing to the *Lancet*, speaks of the very young women who enter medical schools to study medicine, and he appears to suggest that the same age limit should be placed on the entrance of women to the medical as to the Nursing profession. This would be a great injustice to women medical students, who must on this, as on all other points, be placed on absolutely equal terms as men medicos. It is, of course, apparent that the physical strain put on Nurses makes it necessary that their age should be above that of medical students, but that has nothing to do with the case. "Auto" says he recommends that deans of medical schools should recommend some age limit under which the age of medicine should not be commenced, &c., &c. I believe if he applies to any medical college receiving women students, he will find there is the usual age limit of eighteen.

Sincerely yours,
A WOMAN MEDICAL STUDENT.

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