

SIXPENCE FARTHING A VISIT!

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I quote the following from the *Cork Herald*, which, in speaking of the first Annual Report of the Charleville District Nursing Association, which has just been issued, says:—"It is satisfactory to learn that the efforts of the promoters of this benevolent association have been crowned with success, and a Nurse has been employed at a salary of £49, who has attended no fewer than 86 patients (including one suffering from typhoid fever), who received 1,396 visits, or on an average 16 visits to each patient. This lady discharged her onerous duties to the satisfaction of all concerned."

I have worked this out as an interesting little bit of arithmetic, and I find the Nurse in question discharged "her onerous duties" at the rate of a fraction over sixpence farthing a visit! It seems unnecessary to comment on such payment, but it will make us all cordially agree that the Nursing profession does not offer a very brilliant future. The branch of Nursing which entails the most personal expense and outlay is district work. The wear and tear of clothes is terrible to contemplate—especially when, to pay a sixpenny-farthing visit, you often have to walk two miles on a pelting wet day, and certainly spoil five shillings' worth of clothes, not to count the waste of health by exposure to bad weather, &c. But even supposing the Nurse content from 25 to 35 to earn such a wage—it cannot be called a "living wage"—what is her future? Ten years of district work breaks the health almost of any woman—and what then is she to do? Saving is an absolute impossibility out of such a sum. I have somewhat a large acquaintance among district Nurses, and I find a large number of them *cannot* afford proper food. And by this I mean the diet that is necessary to keep the body and constitution sound for present needs and for future storing. When you consider rent, food, washing, clothing, "incidentals," holidays, and sick times, you must reach the conclusion that I have. I am going to work out further arithmetical problems, and reduce the salaries to so much a visit. I will send these on to you if you see your way to publish this, and I think we shall get at some instructive figures.

Sincerely yours,
Cork. EDITH WILKINS.

WASTE IN THE WARDS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Some time since you had a note in which the Chairman of a Hospital charged the dressers not to be wasteful of "lint and plaster." A contemporary, quoting this, says the advice was of "a candle-end saving nature." But I believe in saving candle-ends in an Institution! I am a somewhat old-fashioned person, and have been for some years Matron of a Hospital where, when I first took office, the waste of stores, both in household and wards, was truly appalling. I at once set to work to remedy such a state of things, and I can show on paper by actual arithmetic that watchful economy on the part of Nursing staff, Sisters and servants has resulted in a saving to the Hospital of upwards of 12 per cent. on expenditure in surgical stores and odds and ends, with increased efficiency and comfort in every department.

When I first took office, lint was regularly used for duster purposes. Now—apart from the economic aspect of the case—lint is a most inefficient duster, owing to its "fluffy" tendencies. So that was stopped. Soap liniment was used by the gallon for scrubbing and cleaning purposes, saucepan cleansing, hand-washing, &c., some of the Nurses using it even in their baths, and as a shampoo for their hair! This has been changed. White bandages were used as decorative bows for children's waists, to tie up the shoulders of pinafores, and on little girls' hair. These big white bows looked very pretty, but being renewed every day mounted up considerably. I also found there was hardly a ward maid in the Hospital who did not employ water bandages in lieu of garters!—the same young women never scrupling to abstract yards of lint to form a kind of chest-protector in cold weather. And they frequently used lint as pocket handkerchiefs, so as to keep down their laundry list. I could go on *ad infinitum* with my list of useless extravagances, but I think the fact of my actual saving is the most significant part of my letter. And I would specially impress upon your readers that the change has been effected without harassing or jarring anyone's susceptibility, and without the least effect on the comfort of the patients or the efficiency of their Nursing.

Very sincerely yours,
AN OLD HOSPITAL MATRON.

MONTHLY NURSES' FEES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—The important question raised by "Doris," as to whether a monthly Nurse who has been engaged for a definite date should be paid just the same when the confinement is premature, and another Nurse has to be engaged, raises an important industrial point. My own experience has been that, in such cases, the patient expects to pay *half fees*, and that the Nurse, rather than have any difficulties, generally decides to accept this. But, legally, I believe the Nurse can claim full fees, and might even enter a claim for board and lodging during the period contracted for. Such agreements ought always to be in writing. Most people are honourable enough in their dealings, but it is well to be on the safe side. A patient who could repudiate entirely the claim of a Nurse to compensation must be utterly dense where fair dealing is concerned. Because it probably means that the Nurse will be unable at such short notice to fill up her time, and it is consequently so much dead loss.

Truly yours,
AN OBSTETRIC NURSE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Will you kindly inform me through the medium of the "NURSING RECORD," if there is a limit to age for a woman to enter a Hospital as a Probationer, and, if so, what that limit is,

And oblige, yours truly,
A WOULD-BE NURSE.

[The usual limit is 35; and few women can stand the strain of training after that age.—ED.]

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