

I will give you my own experience. I had twenty months' training as "special probationer" in two different Hospitals. I started private nursing—and flourished. When I got tired of my nomad life, I began to seek for a permanent post. I heard of two: one was being interviewed by a doctor, the other by a lady. I went to the doctor first—I prefer business transactions with men—and after a few minutes' conversation he said to me "You suit the post down to the very ground," and offered it to me on the spot. He asked me where I had trained, but he said nothing about "how long." I next went to the lady. "Are you fully trained?" she asked. "If you mean by that whether I have been three years in a Hospital, then I *am not*, but if you mean whether I could undertake any medical, surgical, obstetric, or maternity case [I had gone in for midwifery on leaving the Hospital] and carry out any doctor's orders, then I am." I am now filling the post she had been interviewing candidates for, during six weeks.

This is a long preamble, I know, but it is as well to sift the matter and get at the root of it, before we proceed. Your idea of the three year system, has failed in its purpose, but it has also done a very great deal of good; it has been the *leaven* to the bread, it has done for our profession what the Reformation did for Christianity in the dark, corrupt Middle Ages—it has drawn attention to the previous chaotic system of training, it has brought the professional world together, raised the tone of Nursing, and, in one word, has made Nursing a recognized profession. You have been indefatigable, and your zeal about the Nursing profession ought to be crowned with success.

You now advocate a "general curriculum." But is that not as limited and dogmatic as the three year system? Why not have two? Why not have Nurses (Nurses proper) and *working* Nurses? There is room for both, and not only is there room, but we *want* them both. We want the intelligent woman for her skill and her brains, and we want the other class for their physical strength; we want them for the daily routine work, and we want them in many minor posts, where they will be content to settle down and do their work without higher aspirations. A general curriculum would only level us down again and bring us back to mediocrity. Let us have something to *aim* at, something we can be proud of accomplishing. Now, every woman who can read and write, and who can stick at a forty-bed Hospital for three years is a "fully trained Nurse" and wears the Royal British Nurses' Association badge. Is it to be wondered at, that many *really*, fully trained Nurses have despised the badge? All medical men are not equally qualified, why should Nurses be? We require the highly qualified Nurse who can work hand in hand with the Wimpole and Harley Street doctor, as well as the one who stands on the same level with the small general practitioner or the parish or country doctor. Otherwise, I quite agree with the new movement, and will be one of the first to go up for the examinations, and will certainly try and qualify for the higher standard; and thus qualify myself and make myself *eligible* for the highest post of our profession.

Yours,

EXCELSIOR.

[We refer to this letter at length in another column this week.—ED.]

HOURS FOR HOSPITAL NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I regret to see that you do not more warmly advocate the eight hours' day for Nurses. It is not possible that the present length of Nurses' working hours can continue. Surely we require time for study and recreation as well as other human beings, and if we are on active duty for twelve hours daily it is impossible to have any energy left for healthy recreation like cycling, boating, and tennis; and we are reduced to sitting idle, tea-drinking and gossiping, or reading useless light literature.

I speak from personal experience, and I feel, since I began my training in one of our leading Hospitals, that I am deteriorating morally as well as physically.

Yours truly,

A. S. M.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

MADAM,—“Caledonia” has said much on the eight hours' question which I would have said. I agree strongly with her that it is the mental and not the physical strain which is the cause of the breakdown of so many Probationers. And, as a Probationer, I think the remedy will be found in a more organised division in our practical and theoretical work. In this Hospital, when on night duty, we go to bed at one o'clock and are called again at seven p.m. to attend lectures at eight. We have no food provided, and unless we can manage to make ourselves a cup of tea, go starving to lecture, and I have seen Nurses faint during their delivery. How can a woman appreciate theoretical teaching on an empty stomach, or feel up to night duty after a faint? The system is barbarous. Surely the time has come to *changons tout cela*. Then the cramming when the examination time comes—the thing is a farce. Everthing is forgotten a month after the event. Could not the Matrons' Council call a meeting and discuss the whole question? It is a burning one.

Yours,

A THOUGHTFUL PRO.

NURSES AND COSMETICS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Surely the rules of the Royal British Nurses' Association prohibit us from using the letters R.B.N.A. in connection with an advertisement. It appears to me a most unprofessional thing to do, and I hope you will use your influence to discourage it. "A Seeker after Truth" is right in objecting to such an action on the part of a member of the Association. At the same time, I cannot imagine how she can for a moment imagine it permissible for any Nurse to act as a "skin specialist." The whole thing is humbug of the lowest kind, and no Nurse worthy of her calling would lend herself to such quackery. It is to be regretted that these persons cannot be prosecuted and severely punished. All the knowledge a Nurse need have concerning the skin is that it is to be kept *clean*.

Yours,

SARAH G. LANE.

[We are entirely in sympathy with our correspondent.—ED.]

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