

We must fight against this very strongly. Thanking you very much for taking the matter up.

Believe me,
Yours faithfully,
E. ETTA HANDEL, Matron, M.R.B.N.A.
The District Hospital, West Bromwich.

DEAR MADAM,—As a member of the General Council and an old member of the Royal British Nurses' Association, I entirely approve of your intention of calling a meeting in January to discuss freely with the leading Matrons and Nurses (who at the present time are deprived of a voice in the management of their Association) this most important question of the registration of Asylum Attendants. Any proposal you and they may make at the meeting will receive my cordial sympathy.

If Asylum Attendants are to be admitted to the same privileges as those who have gained certificates for three years' training in General Hospitals, the only means of protection to the public and of benefit to ourselves will be by State Registration.

I much regret that my absence from England at the time will prevent my attendance at the meeting, and will feel obliged if you will read this letter, which expresses my feelings on the subject.

Yours faithfully,
E. J. HURLSTON,
Member General Council R.B.N.A.

NURSES A LA MODE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—Why all this excitement—this vexation of spirit and controversy? Why not let the Attendants of the Insane join the Royal British Nurses' Association, which has been stated openly in Court, and at the meeting which followed the Court's decision, to be a philanthropic one, founded for the benefit of nurses.

So be it. Then let those male and female Attendants in Asylums for the insane get registered, and call them nurses if they like. The maid in the nursery is a "nurse"—she is to be seen in country lanes and in the Park following infants and wheeling perambulators—she also wears a nurse's bonnet, collar, and cuffs; and so is her humbler sister, the quack village nurse and midwife, called "nurse." The asylum attendant also wears a cap and apron, and the insane call her "nurse." By all means call them nurses, if you like, but then call us "Hospital" Nurses something else, and let us start an Association of our own, which this time will not be on a philanthropic footing. There was a touching sweet simplicity in the letter of one of the asylum attendants, who tells us that they have had First Aid Lectures. Does that constitute a nurse? If so, a policeman is a nurse; *en voilà une idée*, the next step will be that policemen, who have passed all the three examinations of the St. John's Ambulance Society will want to get registered. I know one who knows his anatomy far better than many fully-trained nurses wearing the badge of competency. Up till now I have refrained from making any remarks on the subject—not being a member of the Royal British Nurse's Association, and, worse still, being ineligible to become one myself, for, according to the Association, I am not a "trained nurse." It therefore causes me great amusement to think the keepers and attendants of the Insane, hav-

ing received First Aid Lectures, are called "nurses," are "registered" and admitted into that *élite* circle, the *fully-trained*, whilst we stand with breaking and crushed hearts . . . outside the pale. "*Hors de l'Eglise, point de salut.*" Thus speaks the Association to us: "Hold a three years' certificate, come to us, be registered, and you shall be saved, you shall belong to the *elect*." No, no, three years are not going to make us good and meritorious—we want something else; we want an independent board of examiners, we want to make nursing a living profession, not a mechanical one; we want to *rise*.

Some people are now apt to talk with a sneer of the "highly-qualified nurse," but we are neither prigs, upstarts, nor "New Women." We are simply what we are—educated women, socially the equal of the medical men for whom we work, and frequently endowed with brains. Surely it is quite as much to the benefit of the doctors to have their cases nursed by educated, well-qualified women, and to be protected against the half-trained ones, as it is for the public. As things stand now, the nursing profession wants a good deal of shuffling. An examination of nurses would be very exciting; I should imagine it would be something like the last day—there would be many surprises; and as to the attendants of the insane, where would they come in? Are they to be examined on psychology and first aid, and then be called nurses? As a nurse—even one outside the pale—I must speak out. What we want to do is to raise our profession; make it worth entering and striving for; make it as perfect an art as we can. How can we do so if we are to be dragged down and placed on the same level with male and female attendants?

Yours again,
EXCELSIOR.

MIDWIVES AND MURDER.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was very glad to see in last week's NURSING RECORD that Miss Brey has taken up the defence of midwives. It is outrageous that women who do their work so well and so bravely, and with so much self-denial as do many midwives, should be subject to the unwarrantable attacks in which Dr. Rentoul indulges in the *British Medical Journal*. If Dr. Rentoul really wishes to protect the public from the evils of which he complains let him help midwives who are also possessed of a certificate of efficiency in general training to register their qualifications, and eliminate the untrained and irresponsible element who bring the whole calling into disrepute. Thoroughly trained midwives do not desire to do more than act in a subordinate capacity to the medical profession. The Incorporated Medical Practitioners, whose candidate Dr. Rentoul was for election upon the General Medical Council, have proposed to bring in a Bill for the legal registration of Medical, Surgical, and Obstetric Nurses. If Dr. Rentoul were to use his influence to forward this Bill he would, in my opinion, be much more usefully employed than in bringing unproved and general charges against a much-maligned body of women. I quite agree with Miss Brey that the effect of Dr. Rentoul's attack will be to forward the registration of midwives who have not had general training, a result which midwives who are also trained nurses will deplore as inexpedient and inadvisable.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
A NURSE MIDWIFE.

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