

perhaps a Bible is jammed under his jaw, his head is tied up, he is stripped and exposed; scalded with hot water if he is a Jew, and perhaps put upon ice if he happens to be a Christian. Instead of favouring the decomposition of the body, means are taken for preventing the appearance of the only sure sign of death. From an object of love, such a person has turned into one of disgust; the house which he may have owned, and perhaps still owns, cannot afford him any shelter against being buried alive, for his heirs wish to have him removed; a person in a state of apparent death, if considered dead, has no longer any right to stay among the living, 'science,' in the shape of some doctor or undertaker, has given her verdict. Down with him to the grave. In other cases, a person has hardly drawn what is believed to be his last breath, when the medical fraternity, like a crowd of vultures, fall upon the apparently dead body and slash it to pieces for the noble object of gratifying their scientific curiosity. This is especially deplorable in cases of violent death from accident, murder or suicide, because the medical fraternity, knowing little or nothing of the law of life, do not know that the soul in such cases remains very long in the body, clinging to it by its desire for life, and that, even when this has ceased to manifest itself outwardly, sensation has not died. . . . If the only reliable sign of death is the appearance of an advanced state of putrefaction, it follows logically that the only means of preventing a person from being buried alive is to wait for the appearance of such a state of decomposition before burying the body out of sight. It is true that it is often difficult, and generally very disagreeable, to keep the body of a person supposed to be dead for a certain time within a house occupied by the living, but the difficulty is, generally speaking, more fanciful than real; for wherever there has been room for a person while he was sick, there is also room for him when he appears to be dead." The authors of the comprehensive and important treatise on this subject, "Premature Burial; and how it may be Prevented," recently published by Swan, Sonnenschein, after citing various extracts from French, English, and American authorities from the time of Buffon, more than a century ago, showing how the dead and apparently dead were treated at various epochs in the world's history in these countries, call attention to the fact "that no profession is more overcrowded at the present time than that of medicine. . . . Hundreds of young men graduate from medical colleges every year, vainly seeking openings for a practice. . . . Then, again, the number of nurses and of those qualifying for this honourable vocation, is already in excess of the demand. . . . Now, the care and treatment of the supposed dead is an honourable vocation, offering a wide field for the instructed physician and the tender and sympathetic nurse, and if the appliances for resuscitation were always at hand, as they should be, in every hospital, town-hall, mortuary, police-station, and in all large hotels and churches, many lives, now subjected to the risks of premature burial, would be saved." If the people would only shake off their unaccountable apathy, and show themselves in earnest in this highly pressing matter, reforms which are sadly needed would follow, and the existing risks of premature burial would be reduced to a minimum.

Yours faithfully,

January 27th, 1897.

M. A.

[We have referred to this subject in the "Echoes."
—E.D.]

LETTERS ADDRESSED TO MISS
WINGFIELD.

THE REGISTRATION OF ASYLUM ATTENDANTS
AS NURSES.

The Home Hospital,
De Montfort Square, Leicester.

DEAR MADAM,—In answer to your letter of December 12th regarding the question of admitting asylum attendants to the Royal British Nurses' Association, I write to say that in my opinion it would be a most grave mistake, alike injurious to the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association and to the asylum attendants themselves. The question involves too much to discuss in such a letter as this, but, without touching on the many side issues involved, it would be a fatal policy to lower the standard for admission to the Royal British Nurses' Association, though by all means I would advocate that the General Council should consider the matter of what can be done to enable asylum attendants to qualify for admission to the Royal British Nurses' Association. As I fear it will be impossible for me to take part in the proposed meeting on January 7th, I gladly sign the enclosed resolution.

Believe me,

Sincerely yours,

ELINOR PELL SMITH,
M.R.B.N.A.

24, Eastbourne Terrace, W.

DEAR MADAM,—I must beg to apologise for not answering your letter sooner.

I may here state that I am in full sympathy with you in your protest against the scheme to place upon the Register of Trained Nurses asylum attendants who have not had their full training in general hospital as well. In the first place it would be most unfair to many nurses who had not quite made out their three years in hospital and, consequently, could not be registered, *and justly so*.

And, secondly, if such a scheme is carried, the *value* of the charter would be taken away from all trained nurses now on the Register. Trusting you will excuse this very short note,

Believe me, dear Madam,

Faithfully yours,

JOAN ANDERSON,
M.R.B.N.A.

London Homœopathic Hospital.

DEAR MADAM,—Many thanks for your paper and letter about the election of Asylum Attendants as members of the Corporation of Trained Nurses. Although not a member of the Royal British Nurses' Association, I am a registered nurse, and most heartily protest against this step being taken, for not only will it lower the high-class standard nurses have been slowly but surely taking, but it will be the means of keeping many a fully trained nurse from her proper place. I also think that if such a step is taken it will prevent many from becoming members who are trained, besides undoing the good the Association has worked for several years so hard to gain.

Hoping that such a state of affairs will never come to pass.

I am,

Yours very truly,

LOUISE BRADGATE.

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