

DISTRICT NURSING AT PLAISTOW.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

March 25th, 1897.

MADAM,—Will you allow us through the medium of your columns to plead the cause of a humble charity, which in this year of over-pressure, stands a serious chance of being forgotten. We mean Sister Katherine's admirable nursing work among the poor of Plaistow and West Ham.

As your readers know, there are very few well-to-do people in that part of London. Dock labourers, factory operatives, and the helpless, drifting population, without regular employment, make up the vast mass of the inhabitants. There are scarcely any general hospitals, and the provision for those who are unfortunate enough to be hurt or seized by disease is wholly inadequate to the needs of the district.

These nurses also do a splendid work among the poor mothers of the parishes in which they work (14 in number).

All who know anything of the London poor must have been struck by the extreme discomfort, and frequently unnecessary danger to which women are exposed at the time of their confinements, by the entire absence of anything which can be called nursing.

Good nursing is necessary at such times under the most favourable circumstances, but how much more when four or five other people share the miserable tenement?

Finally we would plead with country people to give a helping hand to this charity, the great training school for village nurses. East and west, south and north, the Plaistow nurses have gone, carrying the benefits of their teaching to many a poor mother and sick man.

County Councils from all parts of England have sent pupils to be trained there, besides numberless private associations. We would earnestly beg the public not to let such a good work cease for want of a little timely help.

We are, &c.,

MAUD SELBORNE,
E. EBURY,

Members of the House Committee.

Subscriptions or donations may be sent to Robert Williams, Esq., Treasurer of the Maternity Charity and District Nurses' Home, Howard's Road, Plaistow, E., or direct to the Bankers, Messrs. Williams, Deacon & Co., 20, Birchin Lane, E.C.

MENTAL NURSING.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—In your copy of the 27th ult., a letter from an asylum worker appeared. I fully commend the statements it contained. Giving all due appreciation to the Royal British Nurses' Association, I consider that hospital nurses and asylum attendants, or nurses, are quite different, one suited for a hospital nurse would not necessarily be suited for an attendant or nurse on the insane.

Still, I consider the attendant, or nurse, of the insane holds quite as responsible a position as a hospital nurse. The sane are able to assist the nurse in performing her duties, but dealing with the insane is quite opposite, making the duties all the more arduous to contend with. I consider that attendants are quite

on equal standing with hospital nurses, and would suggest that each should keep to their own profession. One thing I may mention, asylum attendants are behind hospital nurses as regards an association or society; and, as mentioned by an asylum worker, I do not think that attendants should ever seek to be members of the Hospital Nurses' Association. What they ought to do is to get the Asylum Workers' Association to take action and get a benefit society for all attendants. Their number being over 20,000, the society would very soon become a strong one.

In conclusion, would the Editor pardon me in asking if the present system of nursing the sick insane be so paralysing and derogatory to the future, how is it that sick insane in hospitals are so very often sent to asylums, and the sick insane under private care under hospital nurses are sent to asylums to die, and thus add to their mortality?

Yours truly,

ONE INTERESTED.

[We thank our correspondent for her letter, but think she has not quite grasped the reasoning of our argument. In regard to the present curriculum in force in asylums for the education of mental nurses we wrote: "Nothing can be more paralysing and derogatory to the future progress in the nursing of the sick insane, than to inspire lunatic attendants with the impression that the curriculum of nursing education at present in vogue, in the best of our asylums, is a satisfactory one, or has reached a standard, which can be accepted as conclusive." Our reason for that statement is that there is not the collection of patients in our asylums, suffering from a sufficiently comprehensive variety of diseases, by which a nurse can be taught nursing *thoroughly*, especially as her attention is restricted to studying the ailments of *one sex only*. Our opinion is that the first step would be that the education of *mental nurses*—as apart from *lunatic attendants*—should be defined, and that the sick wards in asylums should first be staffed with women who hold certificates for general nursing knowledge. This basis of knowledge of the nursing of general diseases—both of male and female patients—is the only foundation upon which an efficiently qualified mental nurse can be trained. That *all* lunatic attendants must necessarily be thoroughly-trained mental nurses is a question for further consideration. We quite agree with our correspondent that the duties of attendants are most responsible, arduous, and honourable, and if conscientiously performed, they are of the same value as other professional work to the community.—ED.]

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I am an asylum attendant, and until I read of the matter in the NURSING RECORD I had never heard it suggested that we should be registered by the Royal British Nurses' Association. I, and many others in this institution, have not the slightest wish to join such an Association. We have heard too much about the way a few doctors are bullying the nurses in their own Association to put ourselves in such a position.

Yours truly,

MALE ATTENDANT

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