

that patient is more or less helpless and dependent upon her, is becoming more and more rare. But how many nurses nowadays think of this? Is not the first question usually, "Is it a good case?" and if the unfortunate patient does not come under this description, does not a nurse more often than not set out to attend him, or her, feeling somewhat personally aggrieved? Cannot every nurse call to mind cases which have been described as "Only an uninteresting old fractured femur," "Another chronic bronchitis and emphysema." And yet these unfortunate people need and should receive sympathy and interest from their nurses.

Now comes the next point. Patients, who lie in bed and observe their nurses all day, are quick to notice their feelings, or the want of them. I can conceive no greater penance for a sensitive person than to be condemned to lie on his back for six weeks, dependant for everything upon a nurse, and to know that he is "only an uninteresting, old fractured femur." Imagine it! I think under such circumstances, though I appreciate skilled nursing to the full, I should dispense with the services of the more highly-trained person for one who would "mother" me a little. The moral which is brought out of this discussion is, I think, not that motherly people should enter the lists, and compete with skilled ones, but that highly-trained nurses should add to their skilled training the uncommon and neglected virtues of sympathy, unselfishness, and motherliness.

I am, Madam, yours faithfully,

OBSERVER.

#### IS LONDON HEALTHY?

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—We so often hear the assertion that "London is so healthy," and that very little more can be done to render it more sanitary, that I feel impelled to write a few lines on the subject. Perhaps, as the question is not really a Nursing one, you may not think it suitable for the RECORD; but I am sending it on chance, as I am frequently struck with the small amount of knowledge on the part of Nurses of hygiene and preventive medicine. The small death-rate of London is quoted so often that it has become more or less of a parrot-cry, which convinces hundreds because they hear it so often. But the death rate really does not indicate the health conditions of the masses.

If that admirable and recently-suggested plan of the State Registration of all cases of Sickness were carried into effect we should get at some alarming statistics which would open our eyes to the vastness of the diseases of cities. Already there are more than *two and a half millions* of illnesses registered annually in London, and this of course does not include hundreds of thousands of cases of sickness which occur; so that we have more than one-half of the population in a more or less diseased condition. More than 80,000 patients are treated each year surgically, and London always has 124,000 children ill in her Hospitals. Added to this, "the healthiest city in the world" has 46,000 consumptives and 49,000 people with skin diseases of one kind or another; so that it is about time that more money were spent in teaching people about health and prevention of disease, instead of all the money being absorbed by Institutions for treating disease—the old story of taking trouble over the stable door when the steed has departed.

Yours truly, HYGEIA.

[We think our correspondent should give chapter and verse for his statements. His figures, we have reason to believe, would be difficult to substantiate. For example, the figures of surgical patients and of children certainly do not represent so many separate individuals. It is well known to all professional people that there are large numbers—perhaps many hundreds—of patients who go from hospital to hospital, and even attend at several institutions at the same time. Yet every one of these is counted separately in the returns of each hospital. And yet again, by the system pursued at some hospitals, patients are counted more than once. These facts altogether destroy the value of such statistics as those quoted by our correspondent.—ED.]

#### PRIVATE NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—The correspondence which is at present going on in your columns concerning private nurses, tempts me to join in and have my say. As a superintendent of nurses, as one who has had considerable insight in private nursing institutions, and also as one who has been at various times a patient in the hands of private nurses, I have my own very strong opinions on the subject. I believe that the solution of the difficulties which are felt with regard to private nurses, rests mainly in the hands of the matrons of hospitals. If they select the right stamp of woman for training, all will go well, and hospital-trained nurses will quickly oust the unskilled workers from the field; but no amount of training will develop gifts or qualities which are not already latent; "you cannot pour out of a pitcher what is not in it," and character, quite as much as training, goes to constitute the really acceptable private nurse. I would plead therefore for the most careful selection of probationers, and for the unsparing elimination of the unsuitable at an early stage.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

SUPERINTENDENT.

#### MENTAL NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—May I ask your permission to say just a few words about the mental nurse question? Your valuable paper has given us the opinions of a great many ladies in important positions in hospitals, but you have not said much about the real views of the people most concerned—I mean the asylum attendants. I have talked to a great many of them, and I should like you to let it be known to nurses that the whole scheme in their opinion is unadulterated humbug. They know nothing of Mr. O. Wood or Mr. Fardon. They have never heard of them, and they think it stupendous cheek, if I may say so, that those gentlemen should pretend to speak in the name of asylum attendants. They would like to ask Mr. O. Wood and Mr. Fardon who authorised them to do so. Anyhow the nurses need not trouble themselves. We are quite strong enough to have a Register of our own, and our Association is already larger than the Nurses' Association, and much better managed to boot. We should be ashamed of ourselves if it were not.

Yours respectfully,

T. M. S.

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