

## MENTAL ATTENDANTS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I should like to say that I quite agree with all you have said about asylum attendants being registered as nurses. Many of us hope that our own Asylum Workers' Association will start a Register shortly, and it will do the work a great deal better than any outsiders could do it. Besides that a great many of us feel it would be dishonourable for us to pretend to be trained nurses, and the doctors who are advising this have not our respect. Now, Madam, will you give us your powerful help in getting better terms for asylum attendants. We know the NURSING RECORD is read with interest by the highest in the land, and that what it says so quietly and strongly has great weight. So asylum attendants would be very grateful if you would make our grievances known. We have bitter hard work—it is untrue to make out that we play cards all day long—we work fifteen and a half hours a day in this asylum, and it is no playing work when you never know minute by minute what will happen. Why yesterday everything seemed quiet, when all of a sudden a patient gave a horrible scream and jumped on me, and was kicking and biting for all he was worth. In a moment, two others jumped on the other attendant, and might have injured him badly if I hadn't been able to quiet my man and go to his help. Then look at the pay—twenty shillings a week is precious little to keep a wife and two children on. My impression is that the system wants altering. Lunatics are sick in mind, and far worse than many who are sick in body. Asylums ought to be hospitals, I think, and managed just the same, and made training places for attendants, then things would be much better in every way. I hope you will kindly give this letter a place in the NURSING RECORD, and give the matter your help.

Yours respectfully, A. A.

## AMERICAN ENTERPRISE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I have read with extreme interest Miss Merritt's paper, published in the NURSING RECORD, upon the "Brooklyn Associated Alumnae and the Organisation of its Registry." I must say I read it with some degree of envy also. How is it that our American colleagues seem so well able to manage their own affairs, while we are hampered and restricted in all directions? Why cannot we have our Alumnae Associations, and our own registries under professional control. In America also the nurses seem to have space to expand, and are encouraged to do so, while we must go on in exactly the same ruts which were made nearly half a century ago. Fond as I am of my own country I really feel sometimes that I should like to emigrate to America, where there is room to breathe, and try my fortunes there. However I suppose the more patriotic thing to do is to stay where I am, and try to help to bring about at home, what our more enterprising cousins, on the other side the duck pond, have already achieved. It is rather ignominious to have to follow in their wake, when we got such a good start; but at the present time they certainly have got ahead of us, both in the matter of professional organisation, and in the thoroughness of the training given in their hospitals also. I must take this opportunity of thanking you

for the benefit you confer upon the nursing profession in editing the NURSING RECORD. What we should do without it I cannot imagine.

Yours truly,

A CONSTANT READER.

## REASONABLE REMUNERATION.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I was very glad to observe in last week's RECORD that you discuss the question of "What is a fair salary for a district nurse? Fifty pounds a year is by no means an unusual salary to offer—in fact, a nurse who asks more is supposed to be mercenary, and exorbitant in her demands. The result of this is that the best class of nurses do not offer themselves for district work, that is unless they have private means. Why should they? In hospital, they can get at least £24 a year clear, after they have gained their certificates, and have consequently no anxiety as to ways and means; whereas, if they are district nursing on £50 a year, it is a constant anxiety to know how to keep the wolf from the door.

The district nurse has many expenses which her hospital sister has not. Her out-door uniform is a considerable item in her expenditure, and her shoe-leather costs her pounds in the course of a year. Let any one who offers a district nurse a salary of £50 a year sit down and try to portion it out. I think she will find herself somewhat in the position of an old woman I once knew, who was in receipt of a shilling, and a loaf from the parish, and who said that "by the time you've paid your rent, and bought some coal, and a little soap and soda, and a few candles, there is not much left to buy victuals with!"

I am, Madam, yours faithfully,

DISTRICT NURSE.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—At last it seems as if the question of the remuneration of district nurses was to be ventilated in their professional paper. If the NURSING RECORD succeeds in impressing the British public with the facts concerning the hardships which district nurses have to put up with, on account of the inadequate salaries they receive, it will have done a good work, if it never does anything else. In the good old days, before nurses were trained, the £1 a week which is looked upon by so many district nursing committees as the proper salary to offer, may have sufficed, but things are different now. I remember well one district nurse, perhaps as good a one as any of her kind. She had been a Bible woman, and picked up a certain amount of nursing with her district visiting. Then she was sent to a country hospital for three months to be "trained" by some philanthropic persons. After this she became matron of a small country hospital, and then she took to district nursing. She lived in a little cottage, and did all her own housework, and was district nurse to a large country parish. She did her best, but the district nurse of to-day is a very different person. For one thing she is drawn from a different rank of life, and for another her training takes three years instead of three months. Skilled labour commands a higher price than unskilled, and if it is skilled nursing people want, they must be prepared to pay for it.

I am, Dear Madam, yours faithfully,

A CERTIFICATED NURSE.

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