

doctors all tell us it is a great relief to them to walk in and find all ready. In a few instances we have been asked to stay and care for patients at our usual fee. I have not one of our cards with me just now. I think the charges are about the same as Miss J. Cuninghame; minor operations, 2 dollars; care of patient for one night, 2 dollars; obstetrical case, one week, two visits daily, 10 dollars.

Hoping I have not trespassed too much on your time,

I am, yours faithfully,  
(Mrs.) L. S. PARSONS.  
Graduate of Training School for Nurses,  
General Hospital, Kingston,  
Ontario.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

June 12th, 1897.

MADAM,—As I am away from home at present, my *Nurses' Journal* for May has just been sent on to me. Enclosed I find voting paper, and I am writing to know if you do not think it would be a good plan if you could spare space in your valuable paper, the NURSING RECORD, to give us the names on the voting paper of nurses at the Middlesex Hospital.

Yours truly,  
W. E.

[As the Council list is now issued, we propose to deal with this very important subject in next week's NURSING RECORD, and we ask our readers to defer returning their lists until after our next issue.—ED.]

LADY MUFFS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—The arguments set forth in E. R. W.'s letter of last week are not conclusive, and one remark I wish to discuss if you can find space for my letter. E. R. W. says in relation to the system of training at Middlesex Hospital: "Lady nurses may perhaps be more suited to be sisters of wards, lady superintendents, authors of nursing books, &c.; but if they do not rise above mediocrity, let me then have a good nurse with her head well screwed on her shoulders, instead of a Lady Muff." All this sounds very just, no doubt; but the question rising out of the discussion remains—What is a lady? If by the term we are to conclude it is an educated gentlewoman, then I have no hesitation in saying that sisters of wards and lady superintendents should never be selected from any other class. But how many educated gentlewomen do we find working in hospitals? My experience is that the number is strictly limited, and that a vast number of women of all classes more or less uneducated (in the truest sense) enter hospitals because their lack of education debars their entry into other professions, such as teaching, etc. Lady pupils, lady probationers, lady muffs, or by whatever title they may be called, are an anomaly in the modern nurse training school. General education and personal character combined should alone be the test of a woman's fitness for entry as a probationer in a training school; and unless a woman passes a certain standard of general excellence in both, she should be disqualified for the profession of nursing. These tests are now demanded at St. Bartholomew's and the London Hospitals, and the sooner Middlesex Hospital adopts a modern standard

of nursing education and proficiency the better. It is a well-known fact that the nurses trained in this hospital are certificated without any examination, an obsolete system both unfair to the nurses and to the public. The fact that the General Council of the Royal British Nurses' Association is packed with the sisters and nurses from Middlesex Hospital is a disgrace, irrespective of their social position. Persons do not need to be born in the purple to act honourably.

Yours truly;  
M.R.B.N.A.

DISTRICT NURSES v. GENERAL DRUDGES  
To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I read with interest the letter in your last issue by Mr. Samuel Knaggs, and think that district nurses are indebted to him for his wise remarks on the subject of district nursing. The idea that the qualified district nurse should be abolished, and that the "motherly," well-meaning, ignorant cottager, who has had a few weeks or months experience of nursing, and who, in consequence, is usually "wise in her own conceits," should take her place, is being advocated in some quarters, and cannot be too strongly combated. Surely district nurses, of all people should be thoroughly trained, so much depends upon them, and their work is so little supervised. As for their first duty being to keep the homes of their patients clean, as some people would have us believe, it is an impossibility, if they are to do their nursing thoroughly. They should, by all means, see that this house-work is performed, but it is rarely necessary for them to do it themselves, any more than it is necessary for the matron of a hospital to do the work of her probationers. Her office is to see that the nurses and probationers efficiently perform their duties, and the duty of a district nurse in like manner is to see that the houses of the patients under her care are kept in nursing order; but it is most rare to visit a house in which there is not some one ready and willing to do the actual work, and, if once put in the way of it, pleased to be asked to do so. I have found from personal experience that the "friendly neighbour" is generally most glad to have my patients' rooms clean and tidy, hot water, and anything else I may require ready for me, and that she is herself in attendance to get anything I may want, if I mention at my visit on the previous day about the hour I am likely to arrive. I believe, moreover, that by educating this woman to work under me, I am doing much more real service than if I did the heavy house-work, in at least a dozen cottages, every day myself, and so incapacitated myself for the work for which I have been specially trained. I really think that those people who hold that district nurses should be "general drudges," as Mr. Knaggs admirably calls them, have only a theoretical view of the needs of the sick poor, and do not know what they are talking about. No district nurse, who is worth her salt, would hesitate to do any house-work if she found it necessary to do so. What I emphatically affirm is that in the usual way it is absolutely unnecessary.

I am, dear madam,  
Yours faithfully,  
A PRACTICAL WOMAN.

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