



Letters to the Editor.

Notes, Queries, &c.

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

LETTERS ADDRESSED TO MISS WINGFIELD.

THE REGISTRATION OF ASYLUM ATTENDANTS AS NURSES.

DEAR MADAM,—Being unable to attend the meeting in St. Martin's Town Hall on the 7th inst., I write to give, as you request, my views on the proposed scheme for placing Attendants in Asylums on the Register for Trained Nurses.

It appears to me that it would be detrimental to the Nursing Profession and misleading to the general public that "Attendants should be registered as Nurses," if they have not been trained for three years in a General Hospital or Infirmary.

In the event of any Attendants being registered who have had training *only* in Asylums, I think it would be most unfair to the general Nursing Profession that they should be able to apply for Nursing appointments or posts as Private Nurses.

No one can wish to underrate their value as Attendants on the insane, but they are *not* trained *Nurses*, and the fact of placing the letters M.N. (Mental Nurse) after their names will not prevent their being considered as Registered *Nurses*; indeed, the additional letters will probably be taken as representing some extra qualification to that of the trained Nurse.

I am, Madam,
Yours faithfully,
FRANCES M. HUGHES.

St. Mary Abbotts' Infirmary,
Marloes Road, Kensington, W.

DEAR MADAM,—I consider that the attempt to place upon the Register, and to admit to membership of the Royal British Nurses' Association, Asylum Attendants is altogether unjustifiable. In my opinion every Nurse should have three years Hospital training before she adopts any special line, and doubtless, if Asylum Attendants were required to comply with this rule, insane patients would be much better cared for and nursed than they are at present.

Instead of suggesting the lowering of our standard to meet the requirements of Asylum Attendants, it would surely be wiser to insist upon the raising of theirs.

I enclose the resolution, which I have signed, as I am in full sympathy with the protest.

Yours faithfully,
E. J. CARTWRIGHT, Matron,
Member Executive Committee and
General Council, R.B.N.A.

The New Hospital for Women,
144, Euston Road, London, N.W.

DEAR MISS WINGFIELD,—I exceedingly regret I am quite unable to be present at the meeting convened for the purpose of protesting against the unfair and objectionable proposal to place Mental Nurses on our Register of Trained ones. If this suggestion be carried I, for one, would immediately take my name off the Register, and I am empowered by my Nurses to say that they would reluctantly be obliged to do the same.

I always understood that the Charter was granted for the express purpose of protecting Trained Nurses, as well as the general public; but if half-trained Mental Nurses are to derive the same advantages as those who have gone through a three or four years' training the effect would, to my mind, be a very disastrous one to the Nursing Profession. I cannot but hope that our Royal President will prevent such a proposition being entertained.

Believe me,
Yours truly,
C. M. BEACHCROFT,
Matron and Superintendent
of Nursing.

County Hospital, Lincoln.

DEAR MADAM,—Thank you for sending me the enclosed resolution to sign. I am glad to have had an opportunity of adding my protest against the unjust and unwise step contemplated by the officials of the Royal British Nurses' Association.

I have come in contact with many Asylum Attendants; their work does not fit them for general sick Nursing. In the same way, training in general Nursing alone does not fit a person to skilfully attend the insane. In each case special knowledge and skill are required, and I believe it would be most injurious to the Nursing Profession and confusing to the public that Asylum Attendants, not otherwise trained, should be placed on the Nurses' Register, though I hope the day is not far distant when Midwifery, Monthly, and Mental Nursing will be considered necessary branches of general training.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
M. HUXLEY,
Lady Superintendent.

Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin.

DEAR MADAM,—I am very sorry not to be able to attend the meeting at St. Martin's Town Hall on the 7th inst. Having worked in Asylums for the past two years, I am justified in saying that the present training Mental Nurses receive is very far from the standard required by the Royal British Nurses' Association, and feel the injustice it would be to the members to admit Asylum Attendants as members.

Wishing you every success,
Faithfully yours,
J. E. HUGHES, M.R.B.N.A.,
Chief Nurse of Infirmary.

Richmond District Asylum, Dublin.
January 5th, 1897.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)