

never get that incessant clatter of footsteps on a visiting afternoon, always so distressing to those who are suffering much. All the wards have wide verandahs on both sides—and how happy those men looked with their pipes!

I have had many interesting days during my short visit to the colonies, but none more so than to-day; I only wish I could describe it better.

Yours sincerely,

S. BEATRIX FARNSWORTH.

Sydney, February 27th, 1898.

SKETCHES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—“Sketches” are fresh—let us have some more. It may appear preposterous that a staff nurse should dare to ignore the orders of the sister of the ward, to those nurses trained in a well organized hospital—where the sister is necessarily a three years’ certificated nurse—but my experience was gained in a hospital where the Lady Probationers, some after a few months’ experience, were placed in charge of wards over the heads of thoroughly trained nurses of many years’ experience—because after all it is experience that does it, and we Pros. looked to the staff nurse and not to the sister for instruction in practical nursing. This system until quite lately was in vogue at St. Thomas’s and Guy’s Hospitals, and, I believe, at Middlesex Hospital the Lady Pupils are still given professional procedure over the experienced ward nurses, and that at the London Hospital the certificated nurses have Probationers promoted over them, just according to the choice of the Matron. Of course, so long as there is no definite curriculum of training, and no definite period of training, matrons and committees are at liberty to “promote by purchase” or personal inclination; but it is not fair, and is much resented by nurses, although few have the courage to make a just and open complaint. It should be a regulation in every training school that a sister should hold a three years’ certificate, and have proved herself by character and abilities superior to her colleagues.

JUSTITIA.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—The graphic Sketch on “Discipline” which appeared in last week’s NURSING RECORD affords food for reflection to a thoughtful mind. How comes it that in any hospital the staff nurse is able to command the obedience of the probationer in defiance of orders issued by the ward sister? There can be but one answer. The ward sister is more or less a nonentity in the ward; a figure head may be, but for all that a nonentity. And why? In all probability because her training and experience are very inferior to that which her subordinate has received. Take for instance, a staff nurse who has held this position for some eight or nine years, and suppose—a by no means uncommon occurrence, though happily a less frequent one now than formerly—a lady pupil with a year’s training placed in charge of the ward, over her head. How is it possible for that nurse to respect the professional attainments of her ward sister, or to rely on her judgment in critical situations? Outwardly she may feel circumstances too strong for her, and give her the

formal deference which is due to her position; but deep down is a sense of resentment at the injustice of the prevailing conditions, and this finds its expression from time to time in such remarks as that described by your correspondent. I myself know a nurse, and an excellent nurse to boot, who openly expressed the opinion that “anybody will do for a ward sister; the important person in the ward is the staff nurse.” There must surely be something wrong in a system under which such sentiments take root and flourish. The obvious cure is, I think, that only those who hold three years’ certificates should be promoted to the responsible positions of ward sisters. Such sisters should further be chosen for their capacity for organization and their power of training probationers; in short, on their merits. When this system is universally adopted, and the snobbery of promoting imperfectly trained persons because they happen to have money is recognized and condemned, then, and then only, will ward sisters take their proper positions. Such, at least, is the opinion of

Yours obediently,

FAIR PLAY.

CYCLING.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I agree with “a charge nurse” that it would be most helpful if you would spare us a little space for the discussion of some holiday tours especially from a cycling point of view.

No doubt Cook’s tours may be largely made use of, but there are many nurses who, not being exactly accomplished cyclers, either from want of practice or from “tiredoutness,” may be diffident about joining a party of strangers, and these will find much more rest and pleasure in forming little strolling parties without making “a toil of pleasure.”

Just such a pleasant holiday I enjoyed last year in the Lake District, and as I think others may be glad to do likewise, I send you a few details, especially as the early summer is the best time to visit that part of the country before the rain gets a firm footing, which it does later on, more or less, till October, when a delightful Autumn season sets in, perfection for cycling, except that the beautiful evenings are gone. Apart from some hills which can only be walked, the character of the roads is “switchback,” and their surface perfect, the rain coming in useful to keep the dust in order.

It was in October that I joined two friends in farmhouse lodgings close to Keswick. We found the advantage, on wet days, of being within easy reach of church, reading room, library and shops.

When we did not care to cycle we had the lake, the hills, and the glens. The coaching season was over, but that did not trouble us. Our cycles took us round Derwentwater, Bassenthwaitewater, and to Borrowdale, Buttermere, Thirlmere—all pleasant distance rides.

In the beautiful St. Luke’s summer we went farther off into the Wordsworth country and slept two nights at Ambleside. I must give you a little sketch of that expedition: We started about 10 a.m. on a Thursday from Keswick, and rode by Thirlmere, Grasmere, and Rydal, reaching Ambleside about 5 p.m., having stopped for a long rest and lunch at a small farmhouse at the end of Thirlmere, and dismounted many times to enjoy the enchanting scenery;

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