



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.

AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM.—After the Annual Meeting of Asylum Workers I felt, that as there was no opportunity of removing the misapprehension likely to arise from the speech of the Chairman, the only possibility of contradicting the erroneous impression then given, with regard to the attitude of many members of the Royal British Nurses' Association, towards the admission of Asylum Attendants to the Register of Trained Nurses, was by addressing the enclosed letter to *Asylum News*. The Editor of that Journal has courteously written to say that he was unable, from lack of space, to insert any correspondence in this month's issue, and further, that he has already so much held over in this department that there is little hope of its insertion in future issues. I therefore write to ask if you will be good enough to publish, in the *NURSING RECORD*, an answer to what I conceive to be a very unjust and gratuitous attack from an unfair point of vantage; the attacked being afforded absolutely no opportunity of defending themselves.

I am, dear Madam,

Your's faithfully,

MARGARET BREAY.

To the Editor of "Asylum News."

SIR,—As there was no opportunity afforded at the Annual Meeting of Asylum Workers for comment upon the remarks made by the chairman, Sir James Crichton Brown, with reference to the attitude assumed by many matron and nurse members of the Royal British Nurses Association to the admission of Asylum Attendants to the Register of Trained Nurses, perhaps you will kindly allow me to explain their position in the columns of *Asylum News*. The Register of the Royal British Nurses' Association is a Register of Trained Nurses, and, therefore, we oppose the registration of asylum attendants *as such*, in the same way that we should object to the admission of medical women, or medical men as such. They belong to a most honourable profession, but they are not trained nurses. Further from the foundation of the Royal British Nurses' Association, it has been held that no sort of specialism qualifies for admission to the Register. In this we have precedent in the Medical Register. Medical men require a triple qualification in medicine, surgery, and obstetrics before a candidate is eligible for admission to the medical register. Nurses claim, and have hitherto carried out, a similar rule with regard to their own register. If asylum attendants without general training are admitted to the Register of Trained Nurses, of necessity midwives, monthly nurses, fever nurses, and every other kind of specialist must follow them, and our Register consequently will be valueless as the register of trained nurses.

In assuming this attitude we claim that we are regarding the best interests of asylum attendants. If they can be registered as trained nurses without qualifying as such, there is no sort of inducement to them to aim at a more comprehensive standard of education. There can be no question, however, that a basis of general training is required before asylum attendants can honestly claim the title of mental nurse, and it is the earnest hope of those nurse members of the Royal British Nurses' Association, who conscientiously disapprove of their being registered as specialisms, that the Association of Asylum Workers will do all in its power to procure for asylum attendants general nursing education, in conjunction with the facilities now afforded in well-conducted asylums for instruction in the care of the insane.

Hoping that you will be good enough to lay these views before the members of the Asylum Workers' Association through the medium of *Asylum News*.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

MARGARET BREAY.

46, York Street, Portman Square, W.

April 6, 1898

STERN NECESSITY.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—You ask "why cannot our new hospitals be beautiful as well as useful?" There is one reason for this which must surely be self evident. All decoration adds to the expense, and I think expense of this kind is quite unjustifiable. Of course, I do not mean that hospitals or any other charitable buildings should be unnecessarily ugly, but I do maintain that when the money is given as charity not one pound ought to be spent on mere decoration. If the cheapest healthy site were always chosen, and the cheapest style of building compatible with the requirements of health were adhered to, we should hear far less of outstanding debts and consequently closed wards.

I live in a community who give largely and at a personal sacrifice; and going over a charitable institution once and seeing all the rooms decorated with coloured tiles and painted dadoes, etc., etc., I thought of the shabby great coats and worn carpets which were still doing duty that their owners might help on the good work, and I lost my interest in that institution for ever.

Beauty may be useful, and an education, but it is not a necessity. There are plenty of rich people, too, who could give to a decoration fund; but do not spend the money of the charitable (or of the ratepayers) in that manner. No wonder the prayers for more donations go unanswered, when the poor man sees that what he gives of his necessity goes to provide beauty and luxury which he cannot afford to have at home.

Yours truly,

AN OUTSIDER.

[Surely the very essence of true charity is self-denial, and the fact that people still exist who are content to wear a shabby coat so that the poor and needy at their gates may enjoy consolation and comfort when sick, in a beautiful hospital, is a subject for thankfulness rather than condemnation. In these days, when philanthropy has become one of the best organised professions, and demands for cash down a solid *quid pro quo*, it is refreshing to know that the charity which "vaunteth not itself" still goes on its straight and merciful way.—ED.]

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