

all persons who have had much experience of either written or *viva-voce* examinations will bear out my view of this. It is most encouraging, however, to see that as in this country, so in America, the minds of the "most thoughtful" members of the nursing profession are bent on attaining greater uniformity. It is less satisfactory, that owing to the way in which our Charter has been manipulated, our American cousins are far outstripping us in the race towards the desired goal.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

MATRON.

THE UNITY OF THE PROFESSION.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I quite agree with your correspondent as to the desirability of a permanent nursing exhibit, and should be delighted to know that the Matrons' Council was organizing one. Since the dishonourable breach of faith with the Matrons in 1895, every scheme of practical value, which we hoped at one time might have been carried out by the Royal British Nurses' Association—surely, the proper body to promote and carry on schemes for the well being of the nursing profession—seems to have become moribund, and we must look elsewhere if we wish to see these schemes carried through.

The lamentable collapse in the programme of the R.B.N.A., is no doubt due to the withdrawal of the support of Matrons who formerly freely gave of their valuable time and advice to the Association, and the consequent lack of interest on the part of many nurses who would have followed a lead in which they had confidence. It appears to me that our only hope, now to obtain what we want, is by a combination of Matrons, and I am very glad, therefore, to know of the formation of the Matrons' Council. The success of this Society must mean the success of the interests of the nursing profession, for the interests of the Matrons, and of the rank and file, are identical. They cannot be dissociated.

I am, dear Madam, Yours faithfully,

A loyal Member of the R.B.N.A.

PRIVATE NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—We hear a good deal in these days about private nurses, and of the duty of paying them full fees. In this I entirely concur, but at the same time I think that nurses should realize their duty to their employers. Surely this includes being companionable during convalescence, but it is not often the case that a private nurse fails absolutely in this respect? If she does not make her patient absolutely uncomfortable—by forcing home upon him the conviction that he is an uninteresting convalescent; and that it is condescension indeed on the part of so skilled a nurse as herself to stay with him at all—she is often most hopelessly dull and uninteresting, as the unfortunate person who is shut up with her finds out to his cost. "Are you fond of reading, nurse," asks a weary voice from the bed; "No, I can't say I am" is the reply, but—with a praiseworthy endeavour to do her duty—"I'll read to you if you like." The reading however is not a success, and it is not repeated another day. "Do you sing?" "No." "Do you play at any games, chess, or dominoes, or draughts," asks the patient wistfully, "No, we never had time in hospital," is the reply; and the patient relapses into silence, and wonders why the woman who has nursed him so skilfully,

and may be tenderly, while he was ill, is so out of touch with him now he is getting better. Surely it is quite as much a nurse's duty to entertain a convalescent patient, as it is to nurse one who is acutely ill. We do not often want many surgical dressings done in the course of the day, nor do we want washing and our beds making more than morning and evening, and if a nurse's talents begin and end with the performance of these duties, she is, I think, out of her element in private nursing.

Yours faithfully,

"A FORMER PATIENT."

CHURCH GOING.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—As the columns of the NURSING RECORD are always open for the discussion of all matters connected with nursing, I venture to draw the attention of your readers to a very real failing on the part of a certain section of the nursing community, namely, their selfishness as regards church going. As it is a failing which belongs to those who aim at a high standard, I am hopeful that if its ugliness is set down in black and white, those who are guilty of it will recognize, and struggle against it, for there is no doubt that it brings serious discredit upon the religion which they profess. Here let me say, I am not one of those who lightly esteem either the obligation, or the privilege, of public worship. On the contrary, I regard it as a source of strength which I, at least, cannot afford to forego, and as a refreshment and enjoyment which in the hard battle of life it is impossible to over estimate. But, I do say that, for the very reason that one values it so highly there is a danger of being selfish about it. For instance, it is quite possible, as a rule, except in private nursing, to get to church before coming on duty at all, and to my thinking, one, is much more actuated by the principle of self-denial, which should surely be the ruling motive of the lives of those who profess to adopt the Christian rule of life as their standard, if one stays away with a good grace later in the day, perhaps in order that some other nurse may go, perhaps to remain with some patient who would otherwise be left alone, perhaps simply because we are told to do so. All of us can call to mind such remarks as "Oh, I suppose nurse— will make herself disagreeable if she does not get to church to-day. How the work is to be done, I don't know, but she does not care how the patients are left, so that she gets off somehow." Sometimes, of course, the accusation is unfair, but, in many instances it is unfortunately true, and I do say that the nurse who does not care whether her colleagues go to church or not, so long as she gets there, the nurse who sulks all day because a tracheotomy case has come in, and she is put on special duty with it, and is consequently unable to get to services to which she had looked forward, does not adorn the religion which she professes. To my mind such a woman has mistaken her vocation, for how can any one with any nursing instinct desire to leave her work and go off to church when a patient needs her services, and, so far as her Christianity goes, it is surely no breach of charity to say that she is at least a most imperfect Christian. Hoping you will find space for this somewhat long letter,

I am dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

A CHURCH GOER.

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