

It is perfectly apparent to the unprejudiced observer that those responsible for the theoretical examinations of the probationers have not quite grasped the necessity for making both the teaching of the probationers and their consequent examination, a distinct part of the training, for which ample time must be allowed apart from practical duty, or it would not be possible to knock up nurses who are on night duty to go in for a severe theoretical test upon which very largely their professional success in life depends, because quite rightly, if a nurse fails to satisfy her medical examiner, she fails to obtain her *certificate*, and either continues to nurse as an uncertificated person, thus swelling the ever increasing army of failures, or has to begin all over again in another institution.

Surely if these examination are so vitally important to a nurse she should be entirely off duty during the days upon which they are held, so that she may come before the examiners quite fresh mentally and physically, I know from experience what a time of anxiety and mental stress these examinations are to the girl with an average education, and surely the strain of ward duty should not increase this, even on day duty, much less on night duty. For instance, imagine a long twelve hours' physical strain from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., and say the examination is to be held in the early afternoon, what sleep is it possible for a girl to get, who knows that her whole future depends upon the way in which she answers some dozen oral and written questions? It seems to me most unfair that she should be expected to undergo this test, without a complete night's rest beforehand; and it is to be hoped that the Chairman of the Royal Infirmary, who says the night nurses were called up before time *by mistake*, will now seriously consider the necessity of not having them called up for examination whilst on night duty *at all*. It is surely time that Matrons, Examiners, and Hospital Chairmen realised that all this theoretical teaching necessary for the modern equipment of the trained nurse should form a distinct part of her education, and that the curriculum should be much more clearly defined, and more time given to probationers to study and prepare themselves for examination. At present at many hospitals which profess to "train" nurses, all the theoretical teaching and study is filched from off-duty time, or dovetailed between hours of night duty, and is the most fruitful reason of the abnormal amount of breakdowns in the health of nurses. Also this absolute authority to do with the "paid servant" (the regular probationer) as seems good to them, is one of the chief reasons of the opposition of Chairmen and narrow minded Matrons to professional "status" for Nurses. Congratulate ourselves as we may upon the improvement in the treatment of nurses during the past quarter of a century, we still remain in exactly the same position as we were twenty-five years ago, an inchoate mass of females, economically dependent and practically helpless, and we shall continue to cut this discreditable figure until we obtain a professional organization strong enough to gain for us just terms of training—and employment. At present, Matrons are too much a class apart, in few hospitals holding the professional position of Chief Nurse, and often thus become alienated as an "official" from true nursing interests, and their aim and object under pressure is to get as much *out* of their nursing staff as possible, instead of finding their first duty in putting as

much INTO THEM as possible. As Mrs. Robb has wisely said—"Once a nurse, always a nurse"—and it seems to me from what I know of the system of King's College Hospital, of which you always speak so highly, that as much has been done by Sister Matron's uniform cap and apron (she always wears strict nursing uniform on and off duty) to educate the Committee and Medical Staff in realising the professional status of the nursing staff, as by her wonderful power of organisation. Sister Matron is to the outward eye Chief Nurse. This is instantly grasped by the most casual and unprofessional observer, and that she is therefore primarily interested in nurses and nursing is the natural sequence. A Matron who dresses in silks and satins, silly fripperies, and jewels, and sits in state, and purposely dissevers herself from the active superintendence of the nursing and nurses ranks herself, unintentionally it may be, *against* the nursing interests, and fails to impress the medical staff and lay Committee with any respect for the status of the workers under her control. If Matrons would only be *proud* to be nurses *first!* Nursing would gain enormously in prestige.

Yours sincerely,

A LANCASHIRE MATRON.

A SUBSIDISED MINORITY.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—The whole scheme to take away our freedom, and depreciate our professional aspirations in our own Association, by the officials of the R. B. N. A. and those who have supported their policy, is as you have pointed out, one of the most cruel betrayals of a women's society that has ever been arranged and ruthlessly carried out; and the fact that "a subsidised minority," such as the Chartered Nurses Society is, has been organized and can be turned in at annual meetings to vote against any one who dares to protest against the anti-registration policy of these gentlemen, is a standing obstacle to any degree of personal or professional freedom ever being regained by self-respecting nurses in the Royal British Nurses' Association. I see from a report of this society that upwards of twenty medical men nearly all in power in the R. B. N. A. Committee, govern it, that the members have no representative on their own committee as have the Nurses' Co-operation and the Registered Nurses Society, so that they are *absolutely in the power* of the men who keep them in cases. This is not only a most demoralising thing for the members of the Chartered Nurses' Society, *but a danger to the public*. It is a case of the employer having absolute power over the employed, a condition of affairs always productive of economic abuse, and which the male industrial world has taken means to prevent. All honour is due to the managers of the "Co-op." and the Registered Nurses' Society in encouraging self-management and government by the members of those societies, and their increasing success gives a gleam of hope to trained nurses all over the kingdom in this reactionary period of their professional affairs.

Yours ever gratefully,

"ONE WHO REMAINED LOYAL."

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