

open and above board, but in numerous instances I have friends amongst matrons who are *forbidden by the male authorities of the hospital* in which they are paid officials to join any society of nurses. I am glad to see Miss Breay brought this out quite clearly in her admirable letter to the *Times*. I fear if "Tommie" is to wait for a reformed system of nursing until all the matrons in the United Kingdom are *free* to express an opinion, he will have to suffer from the present atrocious system for some time to come. Again referring to the petty tyranny over nurses in many hospitals, I would ask how many of the nursing staffs of nursing organizations and training schools have ever heard of the official invitations sent to them from the American Committee convening the great Congress at Buffalo? We have it from Miss Honnor Morten that the Nurses' Co-operation Committee failed to consult the 500 nurses who compose that society. I am informed that the Committee of the Scottish Nurses' Institute at Edinburgh acted in the same inconsiderate manner, and so far, I cannot hear of any Training School Committee which has had the grace to consult the members of the nursing staff with which it is connected. This is proof positive of the manner in which nurses are ignored in matters of vital importance to them as a class. The crux of the whole Matrons' Council correspondence in the *Times*, is this dog-in-the-manger attitude of hospital authorities towards their nurses. Mr. Holland has not a valid excuse for denying the Matrons' Council (composed as it is of thoroughly experienced matrons) the right to an opinion on nursing affairs, or surely he would have objected long ere this to the flocks of society titled women who express opinions and sign manifestoes on nursing questions in the public press. No; Mr. Holland and his class object to nurses thinking and acting for themselves on principle, an attitude in these days as illiberal as it is illogical. Surely if a sporting Duke may form and express an opinion on trained nursing, without any knowledge of the question, at public meetings, our Matrons who are trained nurses of twenty years standing and experience should be permitted at least the same common right without laying themselves open to insult. This last instance of tyranny is indeed intolerable.

Yours,

A COUNTY HOSPITAL MATRON.

[We are sincerely grateful to Mr. Sydney Holland for the publicity given to vital questions which have been brought forward in the correspondence in the *Times*.—Ed.]

HOW MANY NURSES NEEDED?

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I should be much obliged if you would tell me how many nurses are considered necessary in a ward of 24 cots, chiefly surgical cases. I have a Sister, staff nurse, and two probationers on day duty, and a staff nurse and probationer on night duty, and this does not seem to be enough. I do not know how many child patients are supposed to be allotted to a nurse. There is probably a standard rule.

Yours &c.,

"L. S. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL."

[We do not think there is any rule in relation to this matter. From personal experience as a nurse in a children's hospital, we think a greater number of nurses are required per bed than in a ward of adult

patients. For 24 sick children including a proportion of infants, at least one Sister, one staff nurse, and three probationers are required on day duty, so that each shall be off duty two hours daily, and have a half holiday weekly. The Sister and staff nurse should never be off duty at the same time, and the three probationers should be off from 10 to 12, 2—4 or at 5 p.m. for good. At night one staff nurse and two probationers are required, as in a ward containing 24 surgical patients there is nearly always some critical operation case (such as hare-lip) which requires special nursing. With this number of nurses the hours on duty can be so arranged that nine hours active work is apportioned to each, and this is quite as long a strain as the majority of nurses can stand, if they are to be as they should be with little children, *very patient and very cheerful*. We hope some matrons and nurses experienced in nursing in Hospitals for Sick Children will give our correspondent the value of their experience in subsequent issues.—Ed.]

COUNTY HOSPITALS.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I should like to ask your correspondent "Ward Sister" what precisely she means by saying that "trouble is caused in many Hospitals by Matrons assuming or absorbing responsibility which rightly belongs to the Ward Sisters." Sisters are responsible to the Medical Staff and House Surgeon for the efficient carrying out of their orders for the Patients, and to the Matron for the general management, good order and cleanliness of their wards, while she in her turn is responsible to the Committee for everything in the Hospital with the exception of the Medical and Secretarial Departments. I have never yet met the Matron who desired or tried to usurp the responsibility of the Sisters to the Medical Staff and House Surgeon. She has enough on her hands without that. I quite agree with "Ward Sister" that Miss Mollett's system of upholding the authority of the Sisters in their own Wards is right and sensible. I do not see how discipline could be maintained otherwise, but on the other hand I do not for one moment believe that she has washed her hands of all responsibility with regard to the wards because she trusts her sisters. No Matron could do so without failing in her duty to her Committee who put her in charge of the Nursing as well as the Domestic Department. I am thankful to say that in the many years of my hospital work I have never, with one exception, experienced any friction with my Matrons or Sisters, and I cannot help thinking that it is those who complain of the autocracy of their superior officers who are themselves most arbitrary and tyrannical with their own subordinates.

I am, Madam,

Yours faithfully,

H. M. F.

To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."

MADAM,—It seems to me that more trouble arises in hospitals by a Matron having too little—rather than too much authority. Observe the lack of discipline in Poor Law Infirmaries. Ward Sisters who resent discipline always point to the Matron as a bogey.

"RENDER TO CÆSAR."

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