

Standing the Test.

DEAR MADAM.

Miss Gardner's article in your issue of December 22nd, on "Standing the Test," appearing so soon after the publication of the papers on Nursing in the *Humanitarian*, calls for earnest consideration from those engaged in the training of nurses, or who are interested in the organization and well-being of the nursing profession.

During the present state of chaos which prevails in our midst as to what qualifications are advisable before a nurse can be regarded as fully trained, we have, unfortunately, only too many opportunities of contrasting the system now in vogue in most of our large hospitals, of hall-marking the nurse with a certificate only after she has successfully stood a very severe test, with that practised in many smaller institutions of certifying fitness after a very inferior and incomplete trial as to the candidate's physical and mental capabilities.

Unfortunately, for the sake of the Profession at large, the latter misnamed training schools are at present the chief sources whence are drawn the great majority of private nurses attached to Provincial Nursing Homes and Societies. Having had some little experience in the management of such an institution, I feel that too much attention cannot be drawn to the difference in professional standard and conduct developed by the two systems, to the great disadvantage of the latter. We must all surely endorse Miss Gardner's views as to the necessity of weeding out incapables; but this is a matter for experts and not for "the man in the street" to decide; in fact, the general public, as exemplified by popular writers of fiction, are far too ignorant of what constitutes a nurse's training for any weight to be attached to their opinion. It would be as absurd for us nurses to object to the physical and mental training required from, say, an engineer, before he be judged capable to practise his profession, as it is for the writer of the *Humanitarian* articles to criticise our methods of training nurses. The great proof of the advisability of any system lies in the success of its working, and the finished article it produces; no one can deny that, provided the raw material be satisfactory, the training given in our best organised schools of nursing, produces the very best and highest type of the modern woman.

Again, in these days of non-registration, no individual is obliged to subject herself to the severe tests required by the large hospitals before she can call herself "a nurse," and were the conditions of life in them too hard, the falling off in the number of candidates would soon make this apparent; yet the supply of those wishing

to voluntarily submit themselves to these very conditions, shows no signs of diminution, but rather a tendency towards increase.

I do not agree with Miss Gardner that the enthusiasm of the pioneer nurse is on the wane; it seems to me that "enthusiasm" is a very necessary feature in a nurse's character, and that to-day more and more educated and cultured women are joining the army of nurses by means of this very quality which, in very many cases, not only enables them to "stand the test," but to afterwards become an incalculable power for good among those who, in their turn, they help to train.

There are very few of us, surely, who cannot call to mind some of these "enthusiasts" with feelings of deep love and thankfulness for the lessons they have taught us, and we can call no greater witness to the success of the Test system than the lives of these noble women.

There is just one other point which should be considered in this present controversy, and that is the advisability of urging candidates for the nursing profession to spend some little time in preparing themselves mentally and physically for the severe test they are about to undergo. How many probationers come straight to hospital from an enervating life of ease and luxury? Is it any wonder that such girls break down during the first six months of their training and that they go sadly home to bitterly complain of the system, instead of realizing that it is their own physical and mental flabbiness which has been their undoing?

HELEN TODD, *Matron*.

The National Sanatorium, Bournemouth.
January 5th, 1901.

Croydon Infirmary Controversy.

UP to the present the Local Government Board have expressed no views on the controversy between the Matron of the Croydon Infirmary and the Board of Guardians as to whether Miss Julian was justified or not in refusing to sign three Probationers' certificates. It will be recollected that, in consequence of this refusal, the Board disassociated Miss Julian altogether from the nursing staff, thus confining her to the domestic part of a Matron's duties.

The matter is, however, slowly approaching a termination. In November last the Board authorized the Infirmary Committee to take steps to appoint a Superintendent of Nurses.

On Tuesday, in accordance with notice, Mr. A. G. Sibun moved that the Board rescind the resolution passed in November last instructing the Infirmary Committee to take steps to appoint a Superintendent of Nurses. His object was,

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