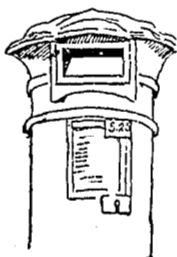


**Letters to the Editor.****NOTES, QUERIES. &c.**

*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.*

**OUR GUINEA PRIZE.**

DEAR MADAM,—I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of your cheque for £1 is. Prize Puzzle.

Believe me, Dear Madam,  
Yours faithfully,  
E. DAINTREE.

**AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM.**

*To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—In your review of last week you discuss Miss Johnston's paper in the *Nineteenth Century* in which she forcibly puts the case against hospital nurses, or, as our American cousins more aptly express us, graduate nurses. May I be allowed to point out that we nurses have a case, and a strong one, against the public? In the first place we are accused of every imaginable fault and shortcoming, except that we do not slay our patients. But, when Miss Johnston make these sweeping assertions does she stop to consider where and how the public obtains its private nurses, by whom it judges the whole profession? There are hospitals and private nursing institutions which maintain a high standard of training and secure to the nurses who earn them the fees they receive, but it is not too much to say that half the private nursing work in the metropolis to-day is in the hands of women who have received no professional training, or a very inadequate one in a special hospital, of dismissed probationers who for various reasons have not been allowed to complete their training, of women who have spent a few months in small nursing homes where there is no professional supervision, and who are neither disciplined nor trained. How comes it that the public employ all these persons? Do they satisfy themselves that their nurses have passed through the accepted term of training, and gained certificates of efficiency? By no means. And then when the work of these women is unsatisfactory, the aggrieved public blame not their own carelessness but the well-trained graduate nurse. Is it fair? Why do not the public come forward to help those nurses who are pleading for legal registration, so that the trained may be distinguished from the untrained? Scarcely a week now passes without some woman "described as a nurse," and in the uniform of one, appearing in the dock for some crime, with the result that the good name of an honourable profession is besmirched quite unjustly, but the public do not seem to have any feeling of their responsibility on this matter.

To one other point I should like to direct attention Miss Johnston complains of the overwork of nurses in hospitals, but it is the public, not the hospitals, which are the greater sinners in overworking us. There are few nurses who do not prefer institution life, with its lower pay, to private nursing just because they get a reasonable time for sleep and regular hours off duty.

Many members of the public seem to consider a nurse lacking in devotion to her work if she wishes to be out of the sick room any hour out of the twenty-four, and have a rooted conviction that nurses are "trained to do without sleep and recreation." Miss Johnston speaks of an eight hours' working day for nurses, and even hints at the desirability of reducing it to six hours. Would she like this rule put into practice in private houses? For the most part, private nurses consider themselves well off if they can get seven hours consecutive rest out of the sick room. I should suggest that the public reform the conditions of nursing which obtain in their own houses before they attempt to set hospitals to rights.

Yours faithfully,  
A GRADUATE.

**HIGH IDEALS.**

*To the Editor of the "Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—Under the above heading you last week published some interesting remarks by Dr. Charles Phelps to the graduates of Bellevue Hospital New York, but I was surprised at one thing he said, namely:—"I fear that a hospital life tends to lessen active sympathy for the sick poor. There are so many of them, they are often so ungrateful, and usually so destitute of graces of mind or manner, that we come to regard them in a purely professional light." I began my nursing career seventeen years ago, and have spent the greater part of it in hospital wards, and so have I not found it. "Alas, the gratitude of men has oftener left me mourning." I cannot call to mind the case of a single patient whom I can describe as really ungrateful, while over and over again their appreciation of what has been done for them has been touching in the extreme. Indeed, I know no better antidote for personal trouble than contact with the poor. They are so brave, so uncomplaining, and so patient when sick and suffering, so grateful for any kindness and sympathy that they put one to shame, and one's own troubles become insignificant. I think if nurses find patients systematically ungrateful, they should turn their attention to their own methods. As in the case of children who are usually disobedient, it will generally be found due to error of management on the part of their teachers, so in the case of ungrateful patients, I believe the reason is to be found in the nurse, not the patient. It would be interesting to know if the experience of other nurses confirms this judgment.

Yours faithfully,  
A HOSPITAL NURSE.

We regret that by a printer's error in Miss Mollett's letter published last week on the surgical work at the Royal Southampton Hospital the number of radical cures performed for hernia in the course of the year was given as 10. It should have been 70.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)