

which seldom employs nurses for any other ailment, and goes into hospitals with its acute medical and surgical cases. It is a common practice, too, for patients having employed a maternity nurse, and liking her, to subsequently request her to undertake medical and surgical cases in their families, utterly regardless as to her qualifications or otherwise for such cases. Thus "qualified nurses" and "qualified monthly nurses" would still practically usurp the position, and fees, of "doubly qualified" nurses, as they do at present. Also, in every class of life, maternity patients are able to converse with their nurses, and do converse to a far greater extent than do any other patients. And proportionately such nurses have more opportunities for conveying to the patient good or evil impressions of the profession with which they are identified.

The light view of maternity nursing and its requirements taken by many is to me always a matter for astonishment. Far from considering a short and inferior training adequate for such responsible work, my own experience of it led me to conclude that, of all branches of nursing, this calls for the very highest all-round abilities and training and character. The woman described by many as "eminently suitable" for such cases is usually an ex-domestic servant, with no higher conception of her work than to make as much money as possible, get as many presents as she can, and do as little work in return as she may. I give one instance out of many known to me—this a very favourable specimen, let me add—a pleasant-mannered, kindly woman of middle age, formerly in domestic service, who had had training in a lying-in hospital for five months under fully-trained Sisters. Yet she assured me, after a few months' private nursing, that she considered maternity work very light and easy, and that she found she had "nothing to do but sit in front of the fire all day with a baby in her lap, and grow fat"!! Imagine any nurse trained to a full conception of her duty forming such an estimate of maternity nursing! My own opinion is that, if properly performed, it is simply killing work. That many women suffer from one or more ailments for months after the birth of a child is beyond question, and I have no hesitation in saying that in too many instances this is directly traceable to the bad nursing they have had. Sometimes a wilful woman, with an excellent nurse, will not submit to good nursing because of her haste to start off again on a round of social pleasures. But the vast majority of such patients place implicit confidence in the judgment of the nurse—sometimes with disastrous results. In relation to this point, it seems to me fallacious and dangerous to train "monthly" nurses to regard their patients as no longer needing careful nursing after the tenth day. I have known of many serious ill-effects resulting from this idea. In lying-in hospitals patients are more or less necessarily sent out early, but it would be interesting to follow up those cases, and to compile statistics as to what proportion of them later on help to fill our women's hospitals.

The minimum of five labours personally attended and twenty lying-in patients nursed for ten days must seem insufficient to all nurses who have had much experience in midwifery and maternity nursing, and who have realised how numerous, varied, and often

appalling are the emergencies and complications which may attend the so-called simple and natural process of child-bearing—and, I must add, of infant-rearing—too.

With regard to the "training" of a nurse, there is so much involved besides the practical points that can only be consistently acquired by at least three years of consecutive discipline and experience under Matrons and Sisters of the highest type and attainments. I, for one, should be very sorry to see any standard lower than this permanently established for the training of any nurses. And the importance of starting a nurse on her career under the very highest influences and ideals cannot be over-estimated. Few after two years under an inferior régime would ever recover from the defects engendered in their professional tone, mind, and manner.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

MENA BEILBY.

[We regret that other letters on this subject are unavoidably held over till next week.—Ed.]

POPULAR CONTROL OF HOSPITALS.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—When one realises that the total expenditure on the maintenance and management of the London Hospital alone is £87,000 a year, while the extraordinary expenditure amounted last year to £92,239, of which vast sum £3,000 is sure to recur every year, making the ordinary expenditure £90,000, one wonders how this amount is going to be gathered in in the future, and, further, where all the thousands of pounds to maintain in efficiency hundreds of other voluntary hospitals are coming from. Personally I have little hope that the charitably-disposed will continue to provide it. Medical and nursing treatment and efficient hospital management are now so costly that it requires superhuman efforts and constant advertising upon the part of hospital authorities to attract subscribers. A Hospital Board elected by the popular vote, as opposed to a nominated Board, might be entrusted with public funds to supplement the incomes of responsible institutions, but the inspection of such institutions must be made by experts in the various departments of its work, and not, on the futile lines adopted by the King's Fund, by inexperienced amateurs. So huge is the sum of money required now to keep our hospitals going that popular control of some sort must be adopted if the work is to be carried on without intolerable anxiety to those good people who are straining every nerve to make both ends meet.

Yours truly,

A HOSPITAL MANAGER.

SEPTIC TANKS.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—Perhaps your correspondent signing herself "Private Nurse" who wrote on the above subject in the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING of January 24th, 1903, might be interested in the following.

About the end of December, 1902, I was called out to assist the Matron of a small hospital, eventually taking her duties whilst she went for her annual holiday.

One of the first things I noticed in my first "round" was (partly by odour) the absence of all disinfectants for lavatories. I naturally inquired the reason. The

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