



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.

THE ANTITOXIN TREATMENT OF DIPHTHERIA.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Having successfully nursed many cases of diphtheria without the use of antitoxin, may I be permitted to criticise the column which appears in the last issue of your journal headed "Antitoxin Treatment of Diphtheria"? After giving the statistics of one institution (the Brook Hospital), the writer concludes with the remark: "These facts show how eminently curable a disease diphtheria is, if treated with antitoxin early enough." I believe this sentence would remain equally true if the words "with antitoxin" were entirely omitted. Surely it is the fact that the sufferers are brought early into the hospitals to receive good nursing, proper diet, precautions against chill, &c., before the disease has taken a firm hold upon them, which reduces the death-rate proportionately to the early treatment.

The mortality per case is sure to decrease so long as mild cases (which before the Notification Act would have been overlooked) are hurried into the hospitals for early treatment. But against this we have to set the fact that, while the average annual death-rate per million from diphtheria for England and Wales for the ten years 1881-1890 was 162, for the ten years 1891-1900 (during which period antitoxin was introduced) it was 262. And taking the years separately, with one exception, the deaths per million from diphtheria have never been so low as they were during the nine years preceding the introduction of antitoxin serum. These considerations lead some of us to suspect that this much-vaunted remedy may, in time, be discarded, as so many others, once equally fashionable, have been in their day.

I am,
Yours faithfully,

A MEMBER OF THE MATRONS' COUNCIL.

WHAT IS A TRAINING-SCHOOL?

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

DEAR MADAM,—There is in the number of September 24th of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING a remark disparaging the training of the Seamen's Hospital, Greenwich, on p. 249, saying: ". . . as it only receives male patients, can never rank as a school which gives a complete training." I am sorry that the Seamen's is ranged on the side of the anti-Registrationists, but allow me to say a word for my training-school, of which I am justly proud.

All Seamen's nurses have to go to the Women's Hospital, Soho, where they get excellent gynaecological training. I dare to challenge anyone to deny that the training of the Seamen's not only equals, but excels, that of most of the London hospitals, simply

because there are no students, and the nurses get better experience. In the theatre and out-patient department they do what students in other hospitals do. Nurses dress serious operation cases, which a student would do. On the medical side they see the treatment of curious tropical diseases, which are not seen in any other London hospital.

I remember as a probationer showing a new holiday Sister, who came from a big hospital where there were students, how to do several things she had never had the opportunity of learning because the students did them, and she thought we were extremely fortunate in being able to do so much.

I hope I have removed any doubts as to the efficiency of the Seamen's training, as it will be most serious to us, holding the joint certificate of the Seamen's Hospital, Greenwich, and the Women's Hospital, Soho, when Registration comes into force, if it were not considered equal to any other, as it practically is.

I am, Madam,

ONE OF THOSE TRAINED AT THE SEAMEN'S.

[In our last issue we mentioned that Sir Henry Burdett, who for many years has been the power behind the anti-Registration throne, had now become a member of the Central Hospital Council for London, which is organising the opposition to State Registration for Nurses, which would place them in a just position, as are their colleagues in our progressive Colonies and in the United States. We stated: "he represents the Seamen's Hospital, Greenwich, which, as it only receives male patients, can never rank as a school which gives a complete training." We think our correspondent corroborates this opinion, as the Seamen's Hospital has been compelled to co-operate with a special Hospital for Women before venturing to certificate its nurses as efficient. Registration will encourage co-operation between special and general hospitals, and thus utilise the clinical material in each for the benefit of nursing education. It will thus greatly benefit special hospitals and also give many nurses a fair chance of a comprehensive training in branches of nursing which hospitals now a law to themselves do not trouble to provide. Thus the Western Infirmary at Glasgow—an admirable institution—does not admit typhoid patients; the pupils do not, therefore, obtain practical experience in the care of this most instructive speciality. This is unfair to the pupils; but so long as there is no defined standard for a "trained nurse" each hospital will continue "to go on its own."—Ed.]

A MINIMUM STANDARD.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The friction amongst the Guardians at the Lewisham Infirmary over the appointment of the new Matron demonstrates, in my opinion, the vital necessity for a minimum standard by a Central Authority. If Boards of Guardians, many of which know nothing of nursing matters, had such a standard provided for them as they have in relation to their medical officers, surely it would be the greatest help. For instance, in selecting a Matron it would be a *sine qua non* that she had been certificated and registered by the Central Nursing Council, let her further experience be what it might. As it is, bad blood is aroused on a board simply because, there being no minimum standard for a nurse, members have a different standard in their own minds, and the Local Government Board is equally helpless.

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