

There are many services a probationer can perform throughout the day short of this. She can assist at the dressings, turn back the bed-clothes, remove soiled dressings, note how a dressing is actually performed, and the training thus given would be of more value to her as an object-lesson than any amount of theoretical teaching at direct variance with the system of practical work in the wards.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
SURGICAL SISTER.

POST-GRADUATE TRAINING FOR NURSES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Will not the nurses of England claim the right of post-graduate instruction? Other professions have this want provided for. Doctors can go back to the wards. Naval officers have a war course. Military men are examined at stated intervals. But nurses are turned out "finished" at the end of their training, much as the young lady of old used to be turned out, armed with a little knowledge of drawing and piano-playing, to face the battle of life. The young lady has seen through the emptiness of this system and has insisted on the right of "going on."

Right up into advanced middle-age, and even beyond, the so-called leisured woman of to-day "goes back to school." American nurses, who manage their own affairs more than we do here, have arrangements for post-graduate training in the wards; it is spoken of as a necessity by those who are planning out the future of nursing in Germany; for Swiss midwives repetition courses are obligatory. What about the English nurse? If she is very keen and good at book-work she can keep up with what is new to a certain extent by reading. But we all know what persistence it requires to grind alone when one is tired. Moreover, practical treatment improves year by year, and can only be satisfactorily learnt in the wards. If the nurse is fortunate enough to be doing private work under a doctor who is new in his methods and willing to teach, she may get her post-graduate training all along the route. But this good fortune comes to few.

Doctors get old-fashioned and slack, and nurses follow apathetically in their wake. I have seen the favourite monthly nurse of a favourite ladies' doctor ignore the modern principles of asepticism. And think of the army of district nurses in the country! They seldom come across a doctor, and when they do meet him, he certainly has not time to give instruction! "That is what a trained nurse is for—to know her work." Yes, good doctor; but have you considered to what a gloriously living profession you belong? Is surgical work what it was even twenty years ago? Where were Finson lamps and open-air treatment then? You expect the nurse to serve you intelligently in your skilled devotion to the sick, but you open no door for her through which she may pass to the necessary light.

There are, no doubt, immense practical difficulties, but are not these made to be overcome? Not to-day or next year, but some day. No progress will, however, be made so long as English nurses are so indifferent as not even to enter into the discussion.

As a first step, let this poor babe have a little air and light and friendly interest! Perchance, some day he may grow strong and lusty.—Yours faithfully,
E. E.

PRIVATE NURSING IN THE FUTURE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I have read with great interest the letter from Mr. Sydney Holland in your journal last week in reply to my letter published the previous week. I beg to thank him for proving my assertion. I said the independent private nurse was being undersold by "subsidised charitable institutions" like the London Hospital, which—

(a) Sends out nurses after two years' training to compete with women whose hospitals have compelled them (very wisely, I think) to work for three years before being certificated. Mr. Holland admits this, and his lengthy dissertation as to the respective value of two and three years' training is quite outside the question.

(b) Pays its nurses salaries on which an outside private nurse cannot exist. Mr. Holland admits this; and he must have been laughing in his sleeve when he argued that a salary of £30 a year, rising in ten years to £55, is comparable in any way with the £90 to £120 a year, the average earnings of the co-operative private nurses. Mr. Holland makes a great point of his nurses receiving a pension of £55 after eighteen years' work. I challenge him to give the number of the London Hospital nurses who are now receiving this pension. It is reported that the hospital makes an annual profit out of its nurses of more than £4,000 a year, an average profit out of every nurse on the private staff of about £26 a year—Mr. Holland will correct me if I am wrong. If his nurses like the process, well and good! but that such nurse-farming on the part of the largest hospital in the kingdom can have any other effect than to undersell the independent private nurse, and crowd her out of the labour market, it would be absurd to argue.

Yours faithfully,
MOTHER OF GIRLS.

Comments and Replies.

Would be Probationer.—There is no central preliminary training-school for nurses in England. Where preliminary courses are arranged it is in connection with one or two of the larger hospitals. You could, however, gain knowledge which would be useful to you by attending the courses of lectures arranged by the St. John's Ambulance Association. You could get information respecting such courses by applying at the offices of the Association, St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell Road. You should also study elementary anatomy, physiology, hygiene, and sick-room cookery, and if possible learn to speak at least one foreign language with facility.

Notices.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

All those desirous of helping on the important movement of this Society to obtain a Bill providing for the legal registration of trained nurses will find an application form on page vii., or can obtain all information concerning the Society and its work from the Secretary, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.

OUR PRIZE PUZZLE.

Rules for competing for the Pictorial Puzzle Prize will be found on Advertisement page viii.

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