

few of our hospitals are adequately staffed, more especially considering what is expected of the nurses in the way of actual ward work.

The fact of reporting was to my mind quite right, and if the Matron had censured the nurse for her want of courtesy and kindness that punishment would surely have been sufficient; but to allow the delinquent to be dismissed *for that one offence* seems to me little short of criminal, for it ruins that nurse's career, and unless she is given a fresh chance in another hospital (which even then means the loss of three years) she can never enter the Services, take any post of responsibility, nor could she be registered.

If there is nothing behind the case, I should think action could be taken in a court of law to compel the Chairman and Matron to vindicate their action, and whilst not exonerating the nurse my sympathies will remain with her until we can know more of the details from each side.

I wonder what the patient has to say about it.

We are constantly being told that nurses are very human, and being so, perfection should be striven for, but should not be expected, at least not until nurses' bodies are made of the finest tempered steel which will bear any amount of work without feeling it, and until they are blessed with the souls and temperaments of angels. Then, and then only shall we be justified in ridding the profession of any, and every nurse who is the least little bit impatient, sharp, selfish, dictatorial, autocratic, etc., etc. Then, indeed, we shall have the millennium.

I hope, Madam, we shall have the pleasure of reading your opinion upon the matter.

I am, yours faithfully,

MARY BURR.

"The Chestnuts," Ebford, S. Devon.

[We regret that quite a sheaf of letters on this subject are held over for want of space.—Ed.]

OUT-PATIENTS' COMPLAINTS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I noticed in last week's BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING a paragraph which it seems to me does a grave injustice to the men who as house physicians and surgeons are doing such good work in our hospitals.

The writers of the press cuttings alluded to seem to me to fail to grasp the idea that there is another side to this question, and it is this:—Patients attending hospitals with letters entitling them to absolutely free treatment expect to be treated with what in reality is greater consideration than that which they would get if interviewing a consultant or specialist to whom a fee of perhaps two guineas would have to be paid. I myself have heard such patients grumble at having to wait perhaps half an hour for a dressing, while an urgent casualty was being attended to. I have heard them grumble at having to pay a penny for a medicine bottle and at other trifles. They do not seem to realise that the treatment they get is free (to them); that it is the best obtainable; that their case is one of many, and

that their turn must be waited as it would have to be in the consulting room of any specialist of repute visited independently.

I have worked under a good many young men, and I have never seen yet carelessness or incompetence or incivility to patients in out-patient departments. On the contrary, I have often wondered at the care and attention that every individual case receives; many and many is the time I have heard: "Doctor, he is that kind ——" The grumbles here are few and far between, the good words many; and I think careful, unprejudiced investigation would prove that the same held good in nine institutions out of ten, and that the injustice done to the rising generation of medicos would be found to be due to the exuberance of the irresponsible press paragraphist, always eager for sensational, if unjust, copy.

Believe me, dear madam,

One who was a casualty and out-patient pro. in a provincial hospital,

MARY CIOELY FAIR.

The Royal South Hants Hospital,
Southampton.

[We alluded last week to the great number of press cuttings complaining of neglect, etc. in out-patient departments, many of them brought before responsible authorities. There is no doubt that in many hospitals junior medical officers are overworked. Our personal experience coincides with that of Miss Fair. The only time we ever heard even a murmur upon the part of a house surgeon, was after hours of out-patient work, when with a sigh of relief he turned from the last patient and remarked quite gently, "Sister, the sick poor weary me."—Ed.]

THE CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD.

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

DEAR MADAM,—One has only to take note of the qualifications of successful candidates for Matronships and such posts to realise how quickly the status given by the Central Midwives' Board has been appreciated by committees and others.

This proves how eagerly well-educated nurses avail themselves of reliable qualifications. Numbers of my nurse friends who have no intention of practising midwifery are studying obstetrics in so far as it is required to pass the Examination of the Midwives' Board, and thus adding its certificate to that they already own for nursing. It is certainly anomalous that a nurse should receive no recognition or legal status as such after a thorough training in this now very skilled profession, and that she can attain it after only a few weeks' study and practical work in midwifery. Thus a certificated nurse of three years' standing and of the greatest skill, is denied the rightful status and protection already given under the Midwives' Act to thousands of ignorant and inefficient untrained midwives. It does, indeed, seem most unfair, and the sooner our Registration Bill becomes law the better for justice.

THREE YEARS' CERTIFICATED NURSE.

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