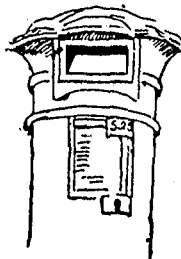


Letters to the Editor.



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.

PRACTICAL POINT PRIZE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I beg to acknowledge with many thanks, cheque for 5s. received this morning.

The "Practical Point" was so simple that I did not expect it to get the place of honour; but, as you remarked in the Journal, it is the everyday, commonplace practical part of a nurse's work which often gets least talked or written about.

Sincerely yours,

Norwich.

ALICE WEST.

OUR GUINEA PUZZLE PRIZE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The paragraph marked in the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING sent to me gave me great pleasure. It was such an unexpected surprise. The cheque arrived this morning, for which I thank you. It will come in very useful this spring if I pass my exam., as I shall want to furnish my rooms in the district I am hoping to have. At present I am getting the Journal through a neighbouring newsagent, and it is read with much enjoyment by the other nurses, and the sisters as well.

Wishing you "God speed" with your work, especially those branches relating to registration of nurses and to morality,

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

ALICE M. ACTON.

Home for Mothers and Babies,
Wood Street, Woolwich.

NOTES OF CASES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The medical student is required by his teachers to keep notes of the cases to which he is dresser or clerk, notes which are carefully supervised, and which are read by him to the visiting physician or surgeon, when going round the ward. The reason of this is, I take it, not so much for the information of the visiting staff as that the student may learn to cultivate accurate habits of observation, and may impress upon his own mind the facts which he thus gathers together.

If this method is so valuable in the education of the student, why not in that of the nurse also? I do not, of course, mean that she should take notes of the medical treatment of cases, that would be quite useless and undesirable in a nurse's training. But practical details of nursing interest in connection with cases I think a nurse should be expected to record. Take a probationer seeing leeches applied for the first time. She ought to be

taught how the patient's skin is prepared, why leeches will not always bite, why they are applied, and where, and how, how much blood each sucks on an average, why it should be allowed to drop off instead of being removed, how it may be made to disgorge itself, and so forth. This is, of course, mere A B C to the experienced nurse, but a probationer will profit greatly if she commits all these facts to paper, and then submits her notes to the Ward Sister for correction.

Yours faithfully,

WARD SISTER.

THE WORRIES OF MIDWIVES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I am glad to notice that midwives are combining in one town at least to raise their fees to an amount upon which they can live. A midwife, under the rules of the Act, has not only to attend during a labour which may mean, and often does mean, four hours work at least; she further, for every day for ten days, is responsible for the comfort of both mother and child, which for the first five or six days certainly means an hour's work a day. Put their work at ten hours for the lying-in period—a very moderate average—that is 1s. for one hour's work, skilled work, not charring, but work which concerns the health and lives of mothers and children, and therefore the welfare of the nation, nor does this include the time occupied in going to and from the cases.

I wonder what other class of workers would do as much for the same pay. Night and day, a midwife is never sure when she will be called; she must be at attention all the time. If she has a call which keeps her up all night, she must go on all the next day just the same. There is the comfort and care of all the other mothers and babies for whom she is responsible to be attended to. It is one of the hardships of a midwife's life that, though her work is essentially uncertain, and sudden calls make most urgent and exacting demands upon her, the routine work must go on just the same. It is this necessity for meeting both the emergencies and the ordinary demands of her calling which make a midwife's life so wearing. Where several work together in a home it is possible to arrange things to some extent, but where a midwife is single-handed, her nervous system is bound to give in eventually.

Yet 10s. 6d. a case seems to some people a preposterous fee for a midwife to charge! When the sweated industries are considered, why not include the work of midwives who attend a confinement, and care for mother and child for ten days afterwards, for a 3s. or 5s. fee?

Yours faithfully,

CERTIFIED MIDWIFE.

THE IMPORTANCE OF APPEARANCES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I entirely disagree with your correspondent, who writes: "How absurd is the importance conceded to appearances in women." Appearances are most important, but it is of all things important to a working woman that her

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