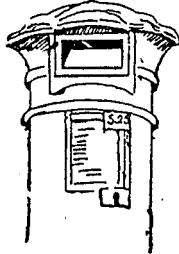


Letters to the Editor.



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.

THE STATUS OF MENTAL NURSES.

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

DEAR EDITOR,—I think many mental nurses will be very indignant at the remarks in a recent issue by the wife of a vicar of 21 years' experience. Though a life governor of one of our largest hospitals, she is evidently very ignorant of the working of asylums. It is well there are more charitable and broader-minded people in the world than some vicars and their wives. If a girl has been a barmaid or unsuccessful servant it does not surely follow that her character is doubtful. I should not (and I have had many years' experience in hospitals and asylums as a Matron) like to say that amongst the many thousands of nurses in general hospitals there are none of doubtful character, or who have been barmaids or unsuccessful servants previously.

A vicar's wife concludes that anyone is considered good enough to nurse a lunatic. I don't think many will agree with her. A barmaid or an unsuccessful scullerymaid may be as easily trained to become a good nurse as the daughter of a clergyman or a nobleman. Certainly amongst the many hundreds of applicants I have dealt with I do not remember a barmaid amongst them. It is a strange coincidence so many should have applied to this vicar for his testimony.

In an asylum, as in any other institution, a girl wishing to enter its service must produce testimonials; no one is accepted without. If her conduct proves good, and if she faithfully obeys the rules of the institution, she is kept and trained. As soon as she enters its service she is called upon to help to promote the welfare of the patients in respect to bodily, mental, and moral needs, and while so doing is certainly entitled to be called a nurse. I admit there may be many who think lightly of nursing the insane, but are there not such in every profession?

An asylum is a place designed solely for the care and treatment of the patients whom it receives, and no ill treatment is allowed.

Nursing in general hospitals has progressed during the last few years, and it is progressing in mental hospitals. What the writer states now might have been said with truth 15 or 20 years ago. I think if she were to become acquainted with some of the up-to-date asylums, their patients, and their nurses her assertions would not be so sweeping, nor would she revert to the term keeper. One thing, I admit, would improve matters in many institutions if the Matrons entirely dealt with the selection of their staff, but in many cases much difficulty

is caused by the applications being made, in the first place to the Medical Superintendent, and afterwards often dealt with by the Clerk.

Hoping I am not trespassing on too much space.

Yours truly,

A MATRON.

THE CELTIC TEMPERAMENT.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The constant depreciation of Irish nursing standards by giving the best matronships in Dublin to ladies trained in England, some of whom only hold a two years' certificate, when our best Irish system includes three years' practical work in the wards, has received ventilation in the press, and we have been left unconvinced of the wisdom or justice of our exclusion in spite of interested arguments.

I hear that a paper recently read by one of the English matrons in Dublin has given offence to our countrywomen, and is considered in the worst of taste, but the truth is that temperamentally very few English people are in sympathy with us Celts, and being notoriously lacking in tact they no doubt tread on our toes, quite unintentionally, from the very superior elevation from which they look down on us. Anyway, if we must be dominated by Britishers at least our best-paid posts might be given to women with knowledge of the world. When this has been the case we have managed to agree, and as a proof we warmly appreciate the great work accomplished by Miss Huxley in Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

IRISH TO THE BACKBONE.

NOTICE.

Will "A Health Missioner," whose article on "The Choice of Fit Persons" appeared in *The Midwife Supplement* of our issue of February 18th, kindly send her present address to the Editor.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS FOR JUNE.

June 3rd.—What care should bed-pans and like utensils, also spittoons, receive in order to prevent odour, and insure perfect cleanliness?

June 10th.—Mention some forms of respiration that indicate serious conditions, and describe them.

June 17th.—Describe a curriculum which would qualify a Sister to become an efficient teacher of practical nursing in the wards.

June 24th.—What are the usual causes of hypodermic abscesses?

Notices.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

Those desirous of helping on the important movement of this Society to obtain an Act providing for the Legal Registration of Trained Nurses can obtain all information concerning the Society and its work from the Hon. Secretary, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.

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