

RECIPROCAL TRAINING FOR MENTAL NURSES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—A recent issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING contains an account of the annual meeting of the Asylum Workers' Association held at the Mansion House under the presidency of the Lord Mayor; and one of the speakers, Captain Kirkland-Whittaker, M.D. called attention to some advertisements appearing in a contemporary nursing paper, emanating from one or two asylums, inviting candidates for the posts of Matron and Assistant Matron, and specifying that such candidates should have received both training in a general hospital and hold the Medico-Psychological certificate—that is to say, they should have been trained in both general and mental hospitals.

A nurse in a mental hospital has, ordinarily, no opportunity of satisfying these requirements of general hospital training, and if she has already thought of devoting her life to mental work, the fact that the higher posts in asylums are barred against her, must give her seriously to consider whether it is worth her while to remain in mental work.

To obtain the Medico-Psychological certificate, three years' training in a mental hospital are required; while to obtain a certificate of general training, the same period is demanded. The nurse who is trained in both institutions would certainly be fully-equipped and eligible for the higher positions, and this either in a general or mental hospital. This would be an ideal training and one I should personally recommend, but it must not be forgotten that a nurse who left asylum work to spend three years in general hospital training would lose the benefits of the Asylum Officers' Superannuation Act, as far as her previous years of service were concerned, unless by some arrangement with the asylum authorities she could still be regarded as being "on the strength."

It would certainly be of the greatest advantage to a nurse to be trained in both general and mental hospitals, for each of these institutions would contribute towards the development of the qualities of tact, organisation, discipline, &c., so essential for making the nurse thoroughly efficient in her work and fit her for responsibility in either institution.

At the same time, seeing that the training in both general and mental hospitals covers, to some extent, the same ground, one is tempted to ask, whether a full three years of training in each institution should be made a *sine qua non*. For instance, if a nurse has received a certificate of three years' training at a general hospital, she is allowed to sit for the Medico-Psychological certificate after two years of training in a mental hospital, yet, on the other hand, the nurse who has received the Medico-Psychological certificate is not allowed to proceed to the certificate in

general nursing, after a similar experience in the general hospital.

Believe me, yours truly,

MARY LORD,

Matron, Banstead Mental Hospital.

[We regret that lack of space compels us to hold over a most interesting letter on this question from Dr. George M. Robertson, of the Royal Edinburgh Asylum.—ED.]

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

E. G. Fosbroke.—"I have had to attend many cases of scabies lately amongst quite clean people, who, owing to expense, have given up wearing gloves. As it was usually on the left hand, I wonder if the infection comes from touching the brass handle in mounting busses—or can your readers suggest another source?"

A Red Cross Nurse writes:—"How about the dangers of inexperienced Commandants and Quarter Masters (girls often just out of their teens) and fires in Red Cross Hospitals? I have known the kitchen chimney left unswept for six months at a time, and been told 'to mind my own business' when I suggested the danger of fire with blocked flues. I see another fine War Hospital has been burnt down. 'Sparks from the kitchen chimney ignited the roof,' to be observed by a gardener. When was the kitchen chimney at Oakwood Hall swept last?"

Another Dublin Sister writes:—"I also want to protest against English Nurses subsidising the College of Nursing Irish Board. Unless it is self-supporting it should be closed down. We Irish nurses object to it on every count. It has been thrust upon Ireland by the trainees of St. Thomas' Hospital. It will always be an apple of discord here. We mean to have Home Rule professionally, as Irish doctors do, and we told Sir Arthur Stanley so when he was recently over here."

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

July 13th.—What points would you endeavour to impress upon a mother as of primary importance for the rearing of a healthy baby?

July 20th.—State fully how you would disinfect a bedroom and its furnishings.

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