

THE DEPRECIATION OF THE SISTER TUTOR.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I should also like to add a contribution to the criticism against the Recommendations to Training Schools recently circularised by the General Nursing Council. There are, to my mind, three principal points:—

1. The overwhelming emphasis laid on the qualification of recognised Professors of Anatomy and Physiology, to say nothing of Medical Practitioners to teach nurses Anatomy and Physiology, not the most important subject of the Syllabus, from a nurses' point of view and practical application.

It is obvious that where such lectures are already given and have been for some time, they are of great benefit to the nurse but more from a Final State preparatory point of view than from the need of the Preliminary Candidate. In such Hospitals also, it is recognised, that such lectures are extras only and do not constitute the groundwork of knowledge which is understood to be primarily the work of the Sister Tutor.

In the case of Hospitals who have not till now had these lecturers established, the recommendations will present many unnecessary difficulties and expenses which will have the effect of eliminating the qualified Nurse Teacher, because Hospital Committees, reading the recommendations literally will naturally come to the conclusion that the lectures given by such lecturers, if they can get them, are all that will be necessary for the nurses' education in these subjects. What optimists!

2. The absurd emphasis laid on the words "Revision classes to be held by the Sister Tutors." What a feeble tribute from one body of trained nurses to another equally as trained and equally as intelligent.

What are they to revise? Surely this work can be done by the unqualified person as it only consists of listening to the beautifully incoherent mass of theories and of trying to make some sense out of them. It certainly does not need all the hard work and earnest thought applied to their own qualifications by present Sister Tutors and those who intend to follow on. Do we want more good practical nurses, or still more high falutin third rate medical students that we see so much more of than is desirable these days? At the present moment, and rightly, the Sister Tutor holds a unique position as the guide post to direct the energy of theory released in the Classroom in the channels of practical application in the wards, and no Professor in the world is going to take her place. The line of demarcation between what is really useful and what is chiefly theoretical, according to the lecturer's ideas, can only be found by the experienced eyes of a qualified Sister Tutor.

3. The emphasis laid on the qualifications of these Lecturers to examine Nurses for the Preliminary State Examination.

We all have many grievances on the methods of conducting these examinations, but till now we have had the remedies in our own hands, shall we still have? If all these grievances were sent, as they should be, to our Governing Body, the General Nursing Council, no doubt remedies would have been found, but the undercurrent of privately expressed opinions on these matters have no doubt contributed to the extraordinary attitude now taken up by that Body. What an ill-considered way of remedying matters, primarily dealing with nurses, to hand over our heritage of Nurse Teaching to the Medical Profession, so many members of which frankly express their disbelief in the efficacy of examinations for nurses at all.

Again, do we not have the same grievances against the Final Examination methods, do we express our professional opinion on these methods, and if we did, would anything be done about it by the General Nursing Council? I do not think so. Will the examiners from

the Medical Profession be any better in the Preliminary examinations? I cannot see that they will. They do not take our examinations seriously, many of them do not take the lectures seriously, will they take their responsibilities as examiners seriously?

Even the experienced and responsible lecturers, the Professors so-called, will they be examining every nurse from their experienced point of view? Of course not, how can they? Shall we get the best of our Medical Practitioners, they are very busy men and even the higher fees will scarcely attract them.

Again, one great point to remember with regard to examinations is not the personal point of view, but the general. Can Medical Practitioners forget their personal attitude with regard to all the theories of Anatomy and Physiology? Sister Tutors, not being steeped in such theories, can easily do so if they are at all rational.

Again, is any reason given at all for this sweeping change? If so, why is it not published and why cannot nurses get together and solve the problem, if any, without the aid of outside professions? First, it appears that we lean avidly to the Education Profession to train our nurses theoretically; next, we nearly embrace the Medical Profession in our endeavour to avoid responsibility towards our nurses in training. We discourage intelligent people taking special training and post graduate work to qualify to teach other nurses. What shall we have left? Superficiality.

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KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE**Why a Tutor, if One May not Teach.**

Sister Tutor writes: "What is the use of trained nurses spending money in qualifying themselves as Sister Tutors if they are not to be permitted to teach? The G.N.C. should have taken the sense of Registered Nurses on this matter which is most injurious to their prestige and pocket. Apparently our governing body does everything *in camera*, and new rules are sent forward without our knowledge. Presumably all we have to do is to submit to injustice. Do help us all you can through the B.J.N., no chance of a hearing in any other journal."

Nurses' Hours.

Office Sister: "We hope you are going to 'say a word' on the correspondence in *The Times* on nursing affairs. Our Matrons are now in the pillory. I note 'A Nurse's Sister' taking part in the correspondence remarks, alluding to various complaints: 'These faults are probably due to the Matron's office being run, not by trained business women, but by nurses with no special qualifications.' We have been offered the 'Games Mistress' by an Association of Teachers, to instruct us in Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene, and now we are to have 'business women' to run the Matron's Department! 'A Nurse's Sister' continues: 'The root of the trouble seems to lie in the fact that the nursing profession as a whole is controlled by elderly women who, whatever their former services to hospital work, are completely out of touch with modern life and the requirements of youth.'"

"From my experience of these 'elderly women' they are just about the gayest and socially minded young people I know. On duty a hospital matron is right to keep up the dignity of the institution she serves."

[See Editorial on front page.—Ed.]

PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR MAY.

What are the symptoms of the invasion of measles, its characteristics and special dangers? Describe the course of the disease and the nursing treatment.

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