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## Original Communications.

### LETTER FROM PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR EDITORS,—

As my visit here was made for a definite purpose my letter may not be of such general interest as most of your correspondence usually is. But to those who are doing gynecological work I think what follows will repay them for the trouble of reading. On my arrival I proceeded at once to the "Preston Retreat," at 500 North 20th Street, and reported myself to Dr. Jos. Price, the Medical Director. Perhaps I had better explain what the "Preston Retreat" is. An old Dr. Preston many years ago left a large amount of money in the hands of trustees for the purpose of building and endowing a model maternity institution. The funds at their disposal were so considerable as to place absolutely no limit on any expenditure which might be necessary in any way towards reducing the death rate of midwifery cases; so that as science suggested improvements from time to time the trustees have carried them out. The position of this institution is peculiar. First of all only married women are eligible for admission. Second it has a paid resident physician; not paid in the ordinary sense

of the term, such as two or three hundred dollars a year and board, which would be thought a large sum in Canada or England for such an officer, but paid to the extent of some five thousand dollars a year, with a magnificent private residence free. For these inducements they can get one of the best men. When I say that Goodell held this position for twenty years, only resigning it two years ago when Dr. Jos. Price was appointed, you will admit that nothing is spared in that direction. And when I add that each confinement costs the nice little sum of two hundred dollars, including a six weeks' stay in the Retreat, you will see that it has everything in its favor to make it a model establishment. It has one other peculiarity which contributes enormously to its success, namely, it has no students coming in from the dissecting room and surgical wards to carry death on their fingers. A series of five hundred confinements has just been published without a death, although among them were fifty-two cases of instrumental delivery, many of the mothers having contracted pelves. There was one case of placenta prævia, three of twins, also several face and breech presentations. The secrets of success seem to be absolute cleanliness of person and surroundings, and abundance of water, soap and pure air. As a rule but one digital