



## Letters to the Editor.

### NOTES, QUERIES, &c.

*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 ANTI-REGISTRATION MANIFESTO.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I am sure you will have the fairness to state that the memorandum against the State Registration of Nurses is signed by no less than ninety-four Matrons, eight of whom are Matrons of big London training-schools, and, in addition, it is signed by many medical men, including Lord Lister, Sir J. Reid, Sir T. Barlow, Sir Dyce Duckworth, and others, in addition to those whose names appeared on the preliminary memorandum. The signatures you publish were only those attached to a preliminary circular.

Yours faithfully,  
SYDNEY HOLLAND.

Kneesworth Hall,  
Royston, Herts.

P.S.—I entirely agree with all that is in the manifesto, but it is not true that it was "drawn up by Mr. Holland."

[We have alluded to the anti-Registration manifesto elsewhere. The opposition of medical magnates, and we may add, of potentates generally, leaves us entirely unmoved. This is a nurses' question, and we claim the right to judge for ourselves in this matter—a right which sooner or later will be conceded to us. Surely Mr. Holland will not deny that he has inspired, if he has not drawn up, the manifesto. From first to last the officials of the London Hospital have taken the initiative in opposing co-operation amongst trained nurses in this country, and they must accept the responsibility for their ungenerous policy.—Ed.]

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

DEAR MADAM,—I have read with some interest, and not a little surprise, the manifesto issued by the anti-Registrationists. Interest, because I really wanted to find out what the anti-Registrationists had to say in support of their position; surprise, that any woman holding a responsible post in the nursing world and possessed of reasoning faculties should append her signature to such an unconvincing document. Again, I note the "anti's" say: "If nurses are to be registered on their technical qualifications it is inevitable that they will concentrate their efforts on the attainment of the technical knowledge which is thus made the *first* essential. From the beginning of their training they will deem the passing of examinations to be of primary importance."

I notice that at the London Hospital theoretical instruction is given to the probationers both by members of the staff and the Matron, that annual examinations are held and prizes given. How shocking! Do the authorities of the London Hospital "of necessity raise to a predominant position" this side of their nurses' work, and "leave entirely uncon-

sidered those personal qualities upon which their main value depends, such as good temper, manner, tact, discretion, patience, and unselfish womanliness"? Or are we to understand that, at the London, a nurse's ability or failure to pass these examinations is not considered in the award of her certificate? This is a matter of some importance, and one upon which, it appears to me, the public has a right to ask for information. If the results of the examinations are considered in granting certificates, then it appears to me that the authorities of the London should withdraw from their untenable position as regards Registration. If not, then why go through the farce of holding them?

Yours faithfully,  
MARGARET BREAY.

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

DEAR MADAM,—All members of the Society for the State Registration of Nurses will rejoice that our opponents have at last put down in black and white their reasons for the faith that is in them, and thus given our friends and us an opportunity of replying to their arguments.

Throughout the manifesto published in your last issue the fact is ignored that, in order to be placed on the register, a nurse would have to go through a practical course of training for a given number of years in a hospital of acknowledged standing, under an experienced Matron, during which time, if she did not possess the moral qualities essential to a nurse, her deficiencies would be recognised, and she would not be permitted to complete her training, and would consequently be ineligible for registration. Under the present conditions of nursing, a woman who has gone through years of training is exactly on a par with those who have perhaps spent three months or less in a hospital and have been discharged on account of being deficient in those qualities on which the signatories lay so much stress, or even for graver moral faults, but who, in the absence of any central controlling authority, are at liberty to don nurses' uniform and to pose before the public as "trained nurses."

The Manifesto states that no one would engage a governess who was on a register without inquiring as to her character as distinct from her ability to perform her specific duties. Quite so; but, on the other hand, would anyone engage a governess without making sure that she is fully qualified to teach what is required of her, and is it not just as necessary to ascertain that a nurse has an accurate knowledge of the special duties that she undertakes to perform? And this is exactly the information that a register would give.

Then we are told that the enforcement of a compulsory uniform training would be an injustice to a large number of women trained only in certain directions, by preventing them from following their occupation. This might be so if we had any guarantee that these women would confine themselves to the special branch of nursing in which they have been trained. But how often do we hear of nursing institutions engaging women who have only had fever training, for example, and sending them out to nurse critical operation cases. Is not this inflicting a still graver injustice on the public who apply for and are led to believe that they are engaging "trained nurses"? It would be interesting to know what remedy the opposers of State Registration would recommend for

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