



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.

STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I have read with interest your article on the "Progress of State Registration," and admire the temperate tone in which your views are therein expressed. I have also read the interesting letters of Miss Brey and a "Member of the Society for the State Registration of Nurses." Whenever any reform is in the air there are always plenty of anti's, and why not? It would not be well for us if we were not allowed different modes of thought and also permitted to have different opinions.

With regard to the signatures of the memorandum against Registration, you may, if you will take the trouble, obtain as many for Registration, both of medical men and Matrons. The Legislature is against class legislation unless it can be shown that such is good for the general public as well as the class for whom the legislation is proposed. Can anyone deny that State Registration would not be of benefit to the public? Surely the possibility of being able to know that the nurse obtained, if registered, has had a three years' training is a benefit to the public. Can any medical man or Matron deny that a three years' training in a suitable hospital or infirmary is one day too long? If they can, then all I can say is, that they have a poor appreciation of the requirements of a nurse. Is it not necessary that some guarantee should be given to the public (who pay large fees for nursing) that those whose services they are obtaining have had a thorough training in nursing? Further, is it not a fact that there are at the present time a number of women, who are nursing, and who have had no more than six months' training, and many of them even managing nursing institutes, employing others, who have had no greater training, and some no training at all? With regard to technical knowledge, allowing a nurse to obtain a certificate and become qualified and registered, this is simply the "trail of the red herring" again; anyone who knows how a three years' course is gone through knows that practical training in the wards, surgical, medical, and gynaecological, theatre, and out-patients' department, is necessary, and equally as necessary as the lectures and demonstrations and examinations. Is it not here that the "born nurse" is first seen and appreciated? Is it not during this time that the incapacities of a nurse are discovered—her untidiness, her want of tact, her want of gentleness, her general unfitness seen, and she can be weeded out within six months because "nursing is not her vocation"? How many of this class are now nursing and are anti-Registrationists?

I have not seen any letter or paragraph in your journal advocating that purely technical knowledge should enable a nurse to pass an examination and get on the register. Surely practice and theory will go

hand in hand, and the three years' course will embrace both, and prevent the unfit from becoming registered.

I see the letter of a "Member of the Society for the State Registration of Nurses" expresses these views much better than I can, as she does also with reference to the duties of a governess.

No medical man would engage an assistant without inquiring into his capabilities; the fact that he is on the register enables him to know that he has been through a proper course of training, and has not picked up a smattering of physic at ambulance classes or in a herbalist's shop.

Registration will do the same for nurses. If the nurse is placed on the register we shall know that her training has been sufficient. Why should the present well-trained and well-educated nurse be classed and only on a par with the deficiently-trained or Mother Gamp because they don a nurse's uniform? Only Registration will enable us to know the difference. Surely, what is good for midwives and the midwifery nurse is good for the medical and surgical nurse. In a few years we shall have no midwife but who has had a training; at present there are a number whose only training has been that of having had a large family of their own. Veterinary surgeons have weeded out those veterinary surgeons whose only training was the grooming and driving of horses, or that of performing the work of a farrier by shoeing horses.

Registration is the only means of letting the public know who has been trained as a nurse and who has not, and the only means of protecting the educated woman, who has taken up nursing as a profession, from being classed with those who have donned nursing uniform because they thought they had a "vocation" and had nursed somebody's grandmother.

Trusting your efforts on behalf of Registration will prove successful,

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM BERRY,
Senior Hon. Medical Officer and
ex-Chairman of the Board of
Management, Royal Albert Ed-
ward Infirmary, Wigan.

Wigan, April 4th, 1904.

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

DEAR MADAM.—The only information to be derived from the manifesto against the State Registration of Trained Nurses is the assumption that if Registration is adopted the whole community will be over-run by what I may call "blue-stocking nurses."

Now, is this assumption based on facts, or is it merely the outcome of biased minds? Let us look at some of the reasons given.

It is stated that "as a system of Registration must be based on the results of testing by examination the technical capabilities of a nurse, it leaves entirely unconsidered a nurse's personal qualities." It further states "it is these characteristics which cannot be ascertained by examination, and which no system of Registration can include." Now, whilst agreeing that the final act before registration will be the passing of an examination in technical matters, it is entirely wrong to assume that any system of Registration must leave unconsidered the personal qualities of a nurse. It suggests that the advocates of State Registration know very little about nursing requirements; but on these

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