

motion of State Registration for Nurses. I am Vice-President of the Society for the State Registration of Nurses, which has a membership of 1,450 trained nurses. I am also president of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses, which has a membership of 500 certificated nurses, and has declared for State Registration.

Last year the Society for the State Registration of Nurses formulated a Bill which was introduced into the House of Commons by Dr. Farquharson, M.P. for West Aberdeen. The Bill, though supported by a hundred members of Parliament, was blocked, but will be again introduced during the present Session by Mr. Munro Ferguson. (This has now been done.—Ed.) The promoters of this Bill asked for, and obtained, a Select Committee to inquire into the whole question of nursing. Although this Committee held several meetings, the points brought under their notice involved the consideration of such important questions that the inquiry was not concluded when the House rose, but an interim Report was made recommending the appointment of the Select Committee during the present Session. The matter may, therefore, be considered as *sub judice*.

A second Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by the Hon. Claude Hay, which was formulated by the Royal British Nurses' Association. This Association was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1893, and possesses powers to deal with many of the objects for which your Society is formed. It also issues a voluntary Register of Trained Nurses.

It is worthy of note that both those Bills provide for the adequate representation of nurses on the Central Board.

My reasons for not accepting the invitation to a seat on the Council of the proposed Society may therefore be enumerated as follows:—

1. That in my opinion the registration of nurses should be authorised by Act of Parliament, and that any other scheme (without such authority) would prove inadequate to meet the difficulties, or mitigate the evils with which we have to contend.

2. That it would appear from the Constitution of the proposed new Society that nurses are to have no direct representative by election on its Governing body. I do not think that non-professional men, however eminent in financial and philanthropic circles should adjudicate matters which are purely professional and involve the consideration of technical questions of much difficulty, and which are in no sense philanthropic.

3. That the proposed rules of procedure would, if accepted, prove unduly restrictive, and inimical to the interests of the nursing profession.

I feel that an apology is due to you for troubling you with such a long statement, and for giving in detail my reasons for not accepting your invitation, but it has occurred to me that you may not be aware of the fact that the question of State Registration for Nurses is under consideration. This being the case, the formation at the present time of a new society for voluntary registration, if it cannot reasonably be considered premature, may not improbably lead to unnecessary complications in the future.

Your obedient servant,

ISLA STEWART,

Matron and Superintendent of Nursing,
St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

Eight Months in French Hospitals.

By Miss EDLA R. WORTABET.

(Continued from page 173.)

Paris was a great revelation to me, and, if I am to tell the truth, I learnt a great deal more than I taught. It is, therefore, not in my purpose to relate what I did, so much as what I learnt. Those matrons who sit in their hospitals and look upon themselves and their hospitals as immaculate have always aggravated me—their end is *stagnation*.

The hospital I was asked to undertake and turn into a training-school on English lines is a little gem. Just out of the gates of Paris, near that pretty little island in the Seine called the *Tatte*, was an old country house belonging to Gabrielle d'Estrée, one of Henry IV.'s favourites. Its old gateway, the beautiful avenues of trees, the subterranean passages, the old terrace and artistic greenhouse, with its statuary, fountain and bridge, testify the period it was built in and its purpose—a pleasure house. Now it has been sanctified and turned into a hospital, and the big *salon* has been turned into a chapel.

The wards, with their aseptic round-cornered, pale-tinted walls, the pneumatic self-closing noiseless doors, and all the latest hygienic arrangements for bath-rooms, lavatories, &c., show that no money had been spared to turn the building into an up-to-date little hospital. In fact this is, I think, one of the things which strike one in visiting French hospitals; it is not the buildings, it is not the doctors, nor yet the appliances, but it is the *nurses*—it is the *women*, the *female element*, and I think that now both the doctors and the administrators have realised that it is a case of *cherchez la femme*—that unless their present feminine staff alters, their hospitals must remain below par. The nun has proved a poor reed, and the rough, hard-working lay nurse but a broken one.

But France has some very crucial problems to solve—politics, religion, and social customs are the terrible difficulties which face the nursing reform movement, and when people talk about the nursing question in France, they seem to say like the successful man, "Do as I did, and you will succeed"; but France cannot do as Great Britain and her colonies did, nor yet as America, Sweden, Norway and Holland have done, for even apart from their political and religious complications, characters, and social customs, and, above all, circumstances are so vastly different. The percentage of educated women who have to earn their living or seek for an occupation or interest in life is a small one, and the broken-hearted or pious French girl likes the convent; that quiet, calm way of giving up one's life for nursing the sick, or devoting one's life in a practical

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)