

## CORRESPONDENCE

(Notes, Queries, &amp;c.)

\* \* We do not hold ourselves responsible for opinions expressed by Correspondents. Brevity and conciseness will have first consideration. See Notices.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—I notice some errors as regards myself in your report of the meeting held in Sheffield, in support of the British Nurses' Association.

It is true I proposed a vote of thanks to Miss Wood, and this I did gladly, for I felt that we were much indebted to her for visiting the town, and giving such an able explanation of the aims and objects of the Association. Furthermore, I stated that, whether or not the Association succeeded in becoming firmly established, it would have lost nothing through the able advocacy of Miss Wood. I certainly did not express approval of the Association, but I said I agreed with Dr. Cleaver's criticisms, which were more pointed than your report describes. I attended really to learn something of the Association, and to be candid, I am not yet satisfied that the Association is at present framed on such lines as to command the cordial support of the Medical profession. In the abstract a Nurses' Association has one's warmest sympathy.

In one of the papers distributed at the meeting the following passage occurs:—"Profession. The word is used advisedly. Nursing, to-day, is as truly a profession as Medicine and Law are professions—requiring, in its way, as arduous and complete a training, as absolute a devotion to duty, as Medicine and Law demand from their votaries."

Now it matters little whether, instead of business, or calling, Nursing is termed a profession. When, however, Nurses are informed that their training is as arduous and complete as that required of a Medical man, they are told what is not only not the fact, but what is calculated to foster a feeling which is likely to tend to interfere with the proper position a Nurse holds to the Physician or Surgeon.

I am not aware that the question also attributed to me is correct.

SIMEON SNELL.

[We felt that it was only right that such a letter as this should be answered at once, and as we received it too late for insertion in our last issue, we sent a copy to Dr. Bedford Fenwick, and have received the following replies.—ED.]

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—I thank you for your courtesy in forwarding me a copy of Mr. Snell's letter to you of the 8th instant, and enabling me thus to answer it at once. I have forwarded it to my colleague, Miss Wood, who, I am sure, will agree with me, that it is most pleasant to receive such frank and open criticism from so respected a member of the Medical profession as Mr. Snell, and all the more pleasant because from the first we have been subjected to so much malevolent misrepresentation at the hands of unprofessional people. Miss Wood will explain that the errors in the account of the Sheffield meeting must have been committed by the shorthand reporter there. I am extremely sorry to hear that Mr. Snell is not satisfied with the present

constitution of the Association. I forward to him, by this post, the paper read at the first meeting of Medical men, held to consider the organisation of the Association, and at which a very large number of the best known members of the profession were present. It contains these sentences:—"Before we enrol a single member, we ask you, as leading representatives of the Medical profession, to tell us whether you approve of the organisation, and if not, what alterations you would suggest in the bye-laws? Secondly, what number of Medical men you think should be on the General Council and Executive Committee, and who they should severally be, so that the Medical profession may always have a controlling voice in the management of the Association?" The bye-laws were eventually drawn up by a committee of Medical men, whose high reputations Mr. Snell would at once acknowledge. I would venture to ask Mr. Snell wherein he differs from the collective wisdom of these gentlemen. I would further ask him to give the assistance we need, and will always welcome—honest criticism from anyone competent to judge—and to tell us the ground for his dissatisfaction with the lines upon which the Association is framed. I am happy, however, to tell him that it has received, and is daily receiving in greater measure, the cordial support of the Medical profession. With renewed thanks for your courtesy in this matter.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

BEDFORD FENWICK.

Hon. Sec. British Nurses' Association.  
20, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W.  
October 15, 1888.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

Sir,—In reply to Mr. Simeon Snell's criticism of the report of the meeting at Sheffield, I should first like to say that the report was written by some of the gentlemen in Sheffield, so that I am not responsible for what it did or did not contain; still I am sorry for any inaccuracies that have occurred.

Mr. Simeon Snell says "that he is not yet satisfied that the Association is at present framed on such lines as to command the cordial support of the Medical profession." We are much obliged for such a candid expression of opinion on the part of a gentleman of such large and liberal views as Mr. Snell, and we shall be further obliged if he will state more definitely the precise point in the constitution of the Association to which he takes objection. It is only by such frank and open criticism that the Association can be brought into harmony with the views of all interested in its work.

The "fatal blot" in the opinion of Dr. Cleaver was that the Royal Charter would compel the Registration of all existing Nurses, and on that point he spoke very strongly; if that is a blot it must be accepted, for the Law of England insists upon it, and whether the Charter is obtained now, or ten years hence, the blot will still be there. It is quite possible for the Association to make a selection among the applicants for a place on its roll, and to a certain extent it does; but forasmuch as it is a voluntary body, a self-constituted authority, its dictum may carry much or little weight. But we hope that in conjunction with the Royal Charter it will in process of time weed out the unworthy Nurses.

Again, Mr. Simeon Snell takes exception to the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)