

"Dear Editor,—

"Much space has been taken in your magazine, of late, for the discussion of a controversy between the nurses of New York City and the superintendents of the training schools. May I ask the graduates to turn aside from this for a time, and give their attention to a matter which I consider of grave importance, and that is the growing English tendency among a certain portion of our profession. I also wish to state that this letter is not written with any view to personal criticism, but entirely in defence of a principle. The framers of the Constitution of these United States, deemed it fit and advisable to rule that only a natural-born citizen should be eligible to the Presidency, and our government has seen fit to abide by this decision. It would seem that this policy should be carried out in all national organizations; yet, notwithstanding the fact that we have plenty of women of American birth, some of them pioneers in the profession, the first National Association for American Nurses has for its president a British subject. Would this have been the case if the nurses of the country had been given a voice in the matter?

"Having access to some of the English nursing journals, I am frequently surprised to find items regarding our schools, reports, etc., which I do not see in our journals. There seems to be a great desire to copy and cater to all that is English, and to reach the English nurses rather than our own. Let our nurses see to it that this tendency 'is nipped in the bud,' and decide to have none of it. We want fewer foreign ideas, and more and better home production. Let us, as nurses, be more American, and act and think with the spirit of Americans.

"Respectfully yours,

"ANNA GATCHELL LAWRENCE."

It is natural that we should feel strong personal sympathy with Mrs. Robb at this mode of attack, but taken with the following paragraph from a letter lately received from America, some light may be thrown upon the "true inwardness" of the above letter:—

"Your staunch support of the value of discipline in our training schools, and your demand that women and nurses must have undisputed right to liberty of conscience, makes the perusal of your valuable paper a great pleasure every week, and it is most helpful to us on this side of the world, who are inspired, like yourself, by a high ideal of personal responsibility. How often I think of your prophetic words in 1892, when you asked me to suspend judgment in relation to the cleavage in the English nursing world. 'Because all are not on the side of reform.' You said, "do not condemn the reformers; many interests are involved in this question, and reforms will not be won without personal sacrifice." In this question of legal status for nurses the question of *woman's status* is involved, and the one will not be improved without the deadly opposition upon the part of those opposed to all justice to women as a sex. If you think you will escape when you attempt nursing organization in the New World you are mistaken; "those who sow the wind must reap the whirlwind," and nursing progress means woman's progress, and you'll have to fight for it, but avoid the fundamental mistake made in the organization of the Royal British Nurses' Association. We have started, we think, on a wiser basis than you

did in England, and all our leading superintendents are at one on important points, but there is no doubt that a feeling of jealousy is slowly arising in the minds of some members of the medical profession, who are not eligible for membership, of the growing power of the superintendents in their own professional association; this is utterly unreasonable and unjust, and we mean to stand firm. I for one have taken to heart the methods employed to 'corner' the Royal British Nurses' Association and the persecution to which those who have protested have been subjected. We shall escape much by the example of your Association, and sympathize deeply with you in all you have been made to suffer, in the cause of nursing reform all over the world. Meet us in Toronto in the spring and we'll show you how we feel over it."

Legal Status.

TRAINED nurses will see with a thrill of shame, in the *Morning Leader*, a sketch of Nurse Brandish, who is charged with the murder of her illegitimate child, in full nurse's uniform, as she appeared at the inquest—cloak, bonnet, veil, and characteristic strings complete. We desire to point out, in this connection, the entire impotence of trained nurses to remove from their ranks criminals, impostors, and others who bring discredit on the profession to which they belong. It is stated that Rose Brandish did not enter the nursing profession until after her ruin had been accomplished. That a lady should be found, as is stated, to pay the fees for her training under these circumstances, shows the estimation in which the nursing profession is held by the public. Trained nurses have also a right to ask who was the Matron who accepted her as a probationer.

In the face of the common danger, it surely behoves trained nurses to sink all minor considerations, and to unite to obtain legal recognition, and a legally qualified Nursing Council, which would exercise the necessary disciplinary powers. At the present time the Royal British Nurses' Association, which was founded to procure professional status for nurses, is acting as a barrier to their professional progress; and should the proposed Bye-Laws be passed by the Privy Council, nurses will find, too late, that they have placed their professional honour in the hands of those who do not desire that they should obtain that legal recognition which their Association was formed to obtain. In strong contrast is the recent action of the General Medical Council, whose decisions are binding upon all medical practitioners. This Council will now not hesitate to erase from the *Medical Register* those medical men who employ unqualified assistants, on the ground that they are "guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect." Nothing could be more significant than the enactments of medical men for their own professional protection, and the lack of support, and the public insult accorded to the trained nurses who demand a like protection.

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