



## 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.*

### MIDWIVES' QUALIFICATIONS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I was greatly pleased to read last week in your valuable journal the able letter signed "M.D.," pointing out the disadvantages which must inevitably result if the pupils of individual hospitals are to be exempt from the examination instituted by the Central Midwives' Board. At the same time, I gather that what the authorities of Queen Charlotte's Hospital petition for is not that they may act as an examining body in the future, but that their certificate given in the past may be regarded as sufficient qualification for midwives applying for registration within two years of the Act coming into force. With all deference to the authorities of this hospital, and while appreciating their endeavour to advance the interests of their pupils, I think this would be a mistake.

We all know that since 1894 the standard of training at Queen Charlotte's Hospital has advanced greatly, and that before that date it left much to be desired. To mention only one point, a Committee which required its nursing pupils to sleep in the general wards occupied by maternity cases could scarcely expect to attract a very refined stamp of woman to its school. Under the régime of the present Matron this extraordinary arrangement has been abolished, and the new Nurses' Home provides proper accommodation for pupils, but I can scarcely think it advisable that the Midwives' Board should accept *en bloc* all the women who received the training of Queen Charlotte's Hospital under the old conditions.

It must be remembered in this connection that holders of the certificate of the Obstetrical Society of London are exempt from examination under Section II. of the Midwives' Act, and that for many years past if the midwifery pupils of a London lying-in hospital did not submit themselves to this independent test it was as a rule because they did not come up to its standard. To my mind, the less the certificates of individual hospitals are recognised during the two years of grace the better.

Yours faithfully,  
CERT. L. O. S.

### THE NURSES' REPRESENTATIVES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—As one who was present at the recent Conference at 20, Hanover Square, on State Registration, I should like to draw attention to one point arising out of Dr. Bedford Fenwick's able speech. Referring to the historic Conference convened in 1896 by the British Medical Association between its Parliamentary Bills Committee and representatives of nursing bodies, Dr. Fenwick pointed out that "only eleven representatives attended,

six of whom voted for a resolution against Registration and five of them in favour of Registration. Naturally enough, with such a division of opinion amongst nurses themselves, the British Medical Association dropped the question." *Amongst nurses themselves!* This, of course, is a legitimate deduction, but of the six persons who voted against the principle of Registration for Nurses it would be interesting to know how many of them consulted the nurses whom they "represented."

The six were:—

1. Miss Wedgwood (Royal British Nurses' Association), and we know that the members of the R.B.N.A. were not consulted before being represented as opposing a principle which they were associated together to maintain. Nor have they been from that day to this.

2. Miss Wilson (Workhouse Nursing Association).

3. Mr. Fardon (Middlesex Hospital). We have Mr. Fardon's word for it that he represented the Committee of the Middlesex Hospital.

4. Sir Henry (then Mr.) Burdett (National Pension Fund).

5. The Secretary of the Glasgow Maternity Charity.

6. The Secretary of the Plaistow District Nurses' Charity.

It will be observed that four of these six "representatives" were men, and it is fairly certain that the nurses they "represented" were never consulted in the matter.

Next time the British Medical Association calls a conference with nursing societies I hope it will lay down as essential that only representatives are accepted who are the direct representatives of nurses, and who have previously taken the vote of those whom they represent. Then we shall get at the nurses' view of the matter, instead of the official one.

May I add that I, in common with many others at the Conference, desire to express my thanks to Dr. Fenwick for his speech, which was in our true interest.

Yours obediently,  
A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

### A HOSPITAL STAR.

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

DEAR MADAM,—The description of a "hospital star" in your last issue was very entertaining, but I cannot help thinking that that same "star" might be somewhat of a thorn in the flesh to the resident officials. Surely between them the Matron and the Secretary might be able to detect the presence of dead cats in dark corners of the basement without the illuminating rays of the "star" being thrown thereupon. If, moreover, he is to go the round of the hospital a sympathetic recipient of the grievances, real and imaginary, of nurses and porters, where will discipline come in? Surely it is the business of the Matron to get at the rights and wrongs of questions which concern the nursing staff. If she is not capable of performing this part of her work efficiently, then the sooner the Committee finds one who is, the better for all concerned; but if all the shining lights connected with a hospital are to approach the nurses in the rôle of adviser, comforter, and friend, I very much fear that capable women will not undertake the invidious position of hospital Matron. That, at least, is the view of

Yours faithfully,  
LADY SUPERINTENDENT.

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