

a nurse? Considering it is a nurses' society, and is composed of at least twenty times as many nurses as doctors, it is not fair that it should be compelled to be represented by a medical practitioner. Hoping you will find space for this lengthy epistle,

I remain,

Yours, &c.

A HOSPITAL MATRON.

[We agree with much that our correspondent writes. We frankly own that our ideal of a Central Nursing Council is an elected body composed of nurses only, as adopted by the Legislature of New York State. But we cannot rely upon ideals entirely in this practical commonplace world, and in an intensely conservative country. Professional self-government is the right principle upon which to build up a worthy profession, but the rank and file of the Matrons and nurses do not appear to have any ambition to accept this responsibility, or to exercise this power. The extraordinary apathy and ignorance which the large majority of Matrons and nurses have shown during the past fifteen years in dealing with their own affairs in the United Kingdom proves that they will require at least a decade of education in professional and business matters before the majority can claim that they have the requisite knowledge to administer an Act of Parliament. When we are compelled to state that, with the exception of the Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, not one of the Matrons holding the most responsible positions in the nursing profession—many of whom have expressed themselves warmly in favour of State Registration—was present at the meetings of members of the S.R.S. and the R.B.N.A. to give the nurses the benefit of her experience and support, we cannot wonder that the medical profession and the public hesitate to endow them with supreme power.

We refer our correspondent to page 46, on which she will find a report of the R.B.N.A. meeting called to consider the Synopsis of a Bill for State Registration, and from which she will learn that it is now recommended that the large majority of the Matrons and nurses shall be *selected*, and not *nominated* by lay committees.—Ed.]

#### EDUCATION AND REGISTRATION OF NURSES: A STUPENDOUS WORK.

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

MADAM,—In studying the Bills for the State Registration of Nurses I observe that the duties and powers of the General Nursing Council and those of the Central Board the governing body in each Bill are identical, so it is presumable they have both been adopted from some other Act. It is to be hoped that the Societies which have drafted Bills realise the enormous amount of work they propose to accomplish. It takes upwards of a dozen colleges and other bodies to do this work for the medical profession, and there are many more nurses than medical students to deal with.

Frankly, I do not see how hospital Matrons, who are fully engaged with their own arduous duties, can possibly spare the time to attend many meetings, help with examinations, and, indeed, carry on a Nursing College. It is different with doctors, as their time is their own; but Matrons are public officials, whose working hours belong to the hospital.

Then, how are nurse representatives to be any real

good on such a Council? A few hospital Sisters might occasionally attend meetings, but the times off duty of nurses, working either in the wards, or in districts, or as private nurses, are so uncertain that I don't see how they can undertake such responsible work.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that it will be made easy for well-known ladies who may have retired from responsible Matronships or active nursing to have seats on the Council, as they are really the only persons who could give up plenty of time to the work. Here in Dublin one name at once presents itself to the nursing world—that of Miss Huxley, late Lady Superintendent of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, the very woman for the position; but would she be eligible? I hope so.

Yours truly,

AN IRISH NURSE.

[As Miss Huxley would be a registered nurse, we presume her colleagues, the registered nurses in Ireland, could elect her, or any other lady in whom they had confidence, on to the General Nursing Council if they chose to vote for her. This question of its not being compulsory for the representatives to be actively engaged in professional work is an important one. Who more eligible, when her term of office is at an end at the War Office, to represent Army nurses than the present Matron-in-Chief? Again, in Scotland, there is a splendid candidate available in Miss Sandford, recently retired from a most important charge after years of invaluable experience of nursing in all its branches. We have every hope that the nurses in the three kingdoms will choose wisely in electing their direct representatives, and that they will choose women who in the past have proved their fitness to care for their interests. We agree with our correspondent that the work to be accomplished by the General Nursing Council, especially during its first term of office, is stupendous; all the more reason for appointing the most earnest and able men and women on to it that can be persuaded to act.—Ed.]

#### THE EDUCATION OF A NURSE PRIOR TO HER HOSPITAL TRAINING.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Nursing nowadays has metamorphosed from a branch of domestic economy into a branch of a scientific profession—the profession of medicine and surgery. Unfortunately, the preliminary training of the average probationer nurse is not one that forms a good groundwork for making the best use of her clinical education; she is chosen more or less haphazard and regardless of her mental and educational capacity. She has, in her work, to apply keen observation to small facts, to bring a trained intelligence to deal with the problems that will arise from her cases. How can you expect that intelligence from a woman whose mind has never been trained to accuracy of observation, who does not know how to classify her facts, or balance her data accurately? A nurse has quite enough to do to master the technique of her profession itself when she enters her hospital training-school without having to generally educate her mind as well. She therefore should have a sound general education. Elementary Latin, one European language, English, the elements of chemistry, physics, electrical principles, and mathematics should have formed a sound basis

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)