

profession. The women who form it will "hold hands" to attain the highest. And you, who are a leader towards the heights, will support us, I venture to believe.

Then will you allow me to remove another misunderstanding. Our Union is not "subject to lay control." *The control is entirely in the hands of the professional members.* The professional members of each Branch elect the Committee from amongst the professional members, and the Committee elects officials and representatives to serve on the central bodies. The professional committees have power to co-opt lay associates if they think it desirable to do so. But they are in no way bound to do this. Therefore in a sense the governance of the Society is freer than if they were tied to elect only professional women. They can do what they think best for the development of the work.

As a matter of fact the Committees of larger towns consist exclusively of professional women. Each Branch is free to develop the work in any way it thinks most desirable, and it is obvious that what will suit a remote country branch, where nurses have few opportunities of either professional or sociable intercourse, is quite different to what is required in a large town.

Full members have to possess the same qualifications as those laid down by the National Council of Trained Nurses as being necessary for membership of their Society. They form a body apart with a distinctive badge, and there appears to be no reason why they should not be affiliated to any professional body, or be appealed to for professional opinion. In allowing the existence of lay associates (who have no governing rights whatever) we are only doing the same as other professional bodies, such as the Scottish Nurses' Association, the Midwives' Institute, and the Sanitary Inspectors' Association. By this means we get *breadth of view coupled with professional solidarity.*

We have changed our Constitution, as you say and I hope that we shall do so again and again, in the years to come, so that we may meet the requirements of a profession which develops year by year as fresh responsibilities are laid upon it. The ancient Egyptian influence perished because its laws were stereotyped. We have no fixed law but to "Promote the highest ideals of the Nursing Profession," and we endeavour to do so by what seem to us the most practical methods at present.

As you say, we do not bind our members to any policy as regards State Registration, but I personally believe that by open meetings to discuss the question and by developing a sense of responsibility, co-operation and initiative amongst our members, a great deal is being done, indirectly, but not ineffectively, towards "elevating the nursing profession," if I may quote your words. All who wish can join the Society, which exists for the one definite purpose of State Registration. But what we are trying to do

no other Society has yet aimed at. Our methods are perhaps slow, but they should be sure, and the aim will last as long as the world, as we know it, exists, and no one can disagree with it. We are trying to bring about co-operation between those whose hearts and minds are already united in the common desire to promote the good of the profession. *All will acknowledge fealty to our aim, however much they may differ on other subjects, and so we hope all will join us.*

We are rapidly becoming a strong body of comrades holding hands for mutual help and for the common weal. We shall be in a position to take up more definite lines of activity when we can consult a still larger body of professional members and follow the lines they wish to lay down.

I am, Yours faithfully,
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Hon. Central Organiser.

The Grange, Kingston, Taunton.

[All National Associations of Nurses should, in our opinion, be composed of trained nurses, as they are in America, Canada, Germany, and elsewhere, with a definite professional policy. A Union which leaves all constructive work through legislation, educational standards and economic questions, to be fought for by sections of the nursing world cannot be in spirit or effect in any sense *National*. That is not to say it cannot do useful work of a social order—by social, we do not mean merely convivial and friendly intercourse—but co-operation for the good of the community. The National Council of Trained Nurses is composed of the majority of Nurses' Societies, including all branches of nursing, which have had the courage to come out and fight for professional co-operation and self-government. Its policy is definite and constructive. It affiliates all sections of organized nurses, and it is *National* in word and deed, and is pursuing a policy, through which alone, a powerful National Union of Nurses can be founded. As we have said before, it is the nurses' views and interests which a Nurses' Union must put forth—the lay public have many channels of presenting their claims.—ED.]

NOTICE.

We regret that many letters are unavoidably held over, owing to want of space. This need for the extension of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING is becoming a very urgent question, owing to the numerous contributions sent in, arising, presumably, from a continuous increase of circulation.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

March 15th.—What is the distinction between abortion, miscarriage, and premature labour?

March 22nd.—Describe the best method of flushing the bowel.

March 29th.—Give the general rules for the disinfection of each of the following in the case of infectious diseases: (a) Discharges and excreta; (b) Linen; (c) Utensils; (d) The Nurse's hands.

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