

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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.

THE REGISTRATION OF HOSPITAL CERTIFICATES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I am glad you sounded a note of warning in last week's JOURNAL on the suggestion by anti-registrationists to resuscitate the futile scheme for the "Registration of Hospital Certificates" instead of "Registration of Nurses." Now that the opposition realise that the present disastrous condition of nursing cannot for long be permitted to continue, I know for a fact that those who object to any degree of self-government being granted to nurses, intend to trot out and push the former silly alternative. We must be ready to fight the dangerous scheme with right good will, as we did before, and with our united organisation of English, Scottish, and Irish doctors and nurses combined in the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses we can do so successfully.

As the anonymous "Organiser" of the Nursing and Midwifery Conference, to be held in London from April 22nd to 25th has excluded Nurses' Registration from the programme, and has substituted "The Registration of Certificates" it is to be hoped that registrationists will be present in force when that Paper is read, and will express their views with no uncertain voice. I observe the names of several Matrons who profess to be registrationists, on the Conference Committee, although it is of course almost entirely composed of those who have for years opposed our demand for legal status. I think we have a right to know if these ladies have agreed to exclude State Registration from the programme, and if not, why they are there practically supporting the opposition. Such complaisance appears to me to be trifling with our professional interests. One can't serve God and Mammon.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

ELLEN B. KINGSFORD,

Founder and Hon Sec. Fallow Corner Home,
North Finchley.

THE ABUSE OF NURSES' UNIFORM.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—In reference to the article on the Abuse of Nurses' Uniform, there seems to me a great deal of cant in this controversy.

In the first place may I ask the motive for its use. Is it a matter of professional pride or an

outward symbol of public service? If the latter, is not the St. John Ambulance Nursing Sister justified in wearing it, being trained, not merely to treat, but to some extent diagnose the nature of injuries which most frequently occur in the public streets. The professional nurse is least entitled to disparage the knowledge of a non-professional sister, when we read in your valuable journal of March 8th Miss A. M. Barton Tharle received first honourable mention for recommending for cases of fractured arms and ribs Sylvester's method of artificial respiration in suspended animation after submersion in water. Is this not a grave mistake? I am deeply interested in the honourable status of the nursing profession and deplore the middle-class nursemaids masquerading in your professional uniform, but I am sorry you are so intolerable where the distinctive dress is used by women trained for public service.

May I ask, also, why no objection is made to probationers, who are not yet qualified trained nurses, being permitted to wear the uniform, and yet this objection is made in reference to a St. John's nurse, who is not allowed to wear it until she has gained her certificates qualifying her for public service. On the one hand it is often a means of livelihood, and on the other a voluntary social service.

Yours faithfully,

P. BARTON.

Hatherley Gardens,
East Ham, London, E.

[The wearing of a uniform is neither in the first instance a matter of professional pride, nor an outward symbol of public service. A standard dictionary defines a uniform as "a dress of the same kind to distinguish persons who belong to the same body." Why should not the St. John Ambulance Association devise a workmanlike uniform distinctive of its members (whose services to the public are honourable and important) instead of claiming the particular form of dress distinctive of the nursing profession, and thus assuming to be members of it—which they are not. Orderlies of the Association render the same kind of public service as the women members, yet they have a neat and distinctive uniform of their own. They do not, for instance, claim the uniform of the police, and if they did they would probably be speedily "run in" by offended members of that force for false pretences. In regard to our correspondent's criticism of a correspondent in this journal advising Sylvester's method of artificial respiration in a certain case, we ask her to note that the case was not one of fractured arms, as stated by her, but arm, which makes a considerable difference, as in some cases of fractured arm and ribs it is quite possible for a skilful and experienced person to perform artificial respiration by Sylvester's method on the uninjured side while the other is kept immobile. If the patient does not respond to Laborde's method it is the only alternative, as both Schäfer's method and Howard's are impossible.—ED.]

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