

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.

A PROPOSED NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NURSES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

DEAR MADAM,—Kindly permit me to try to make clear what is intended by proposing to form a National Association of Nurses.

It is proposed that it be an association of nurses of all grades, and that its operations be limited to caring for nurses' interests as they have not hitherto been cared for; that its members supply the funds; that they disburse the funds; that they manage all its affairs; and that the model on which this be done is the Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund, the subscription of which is one penny a week.

At the present moment the nursing press is invited to afford its usual hospitality of its columns to enable nurses to ventilate the scheme by criticisms and suggestions, that a start may be made with a statement of its objects as succinct and yet as comprehensive as possible.

It has been said that it is of no use to propose any such scheme unless it has an influential backing, which is true, but not in the sense intended, as the best backing would be that of nurses themselves. Hitherto influential backing of all good things involving nursing has resulted in too much consideration for the patient, and too little for the underpaid and often overworked nurse, and it is time for adjustment. Committees of management of hospitals and associations have done their philanthropy largely at the expense of the medical profession and of the nurses, but we are not now concerned with the former. If a reckoning could be made it might be found that doctors and nurses have given most of the requirements of the medical charities. The cult of honorary service has been exploited, with the result of many nurses reaching the end of their working years without adequate provision, and in some cases without any provision at all, as when they have not had time through breakdown. The R.N.P. Fund affords an illustration of what can be done on the present rates of pay—an average pension of about ten shillings a week!

Sixty years ago, when Florence Nightingale was asked to go with a few women to the Crimea, Nursing might be honorary, but now it is a profession demanding high qualifications, and must be paid for.

After two or three weeks it is intended to invite, through the Press, all nurses to send a post-card, "Yes" or "No," whether they will join, and it is hoped that ten thousand may respond favourably. If, however, it be only

five thousand a few London adherents and others can meet, a general meeting called, a secretary and a treasurer appointed, and an office taken, as the income will be £1,000 a year, which could reasonably be expected to grow.

J. S. POLLITT,
Hon. Treasurer.

Blackburn District Nursing
Association (Incorp.),

[We have alluded to this scheme at length in our editorial columns.—Ed.]

THE ANTI-REGISTRATION UKASE AT BART'S.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

DEAR MADAM,—In view of the personal element in the protest meeting I see advertised in your JOURNAL, *re* "State Registration at Bart's," I feel you should know before it takes place, that Miss McIntosh's question with regard to the holding of the meeting in the hospital, was put to the committee, and is entered in their minutes; and had the committee granted the request the meeting would have taken place. Therefore, I think a great injustice has been done Miss McIntosh by the attack made on her through the Press.

As State Registrationists we must all be lovers of justice, so for that reason I write you this.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
E. BRYAN,
State Registrationist.

Paying Probationers' Home,
24, King's Square, E.C.

[Our correspondent will find our views on this question on page 67. We claim that, as the authorities of St. Bartholomew's Hospital have for years permitted the nursing staff to meet and discuss their own professional affairs, thereby establishing a precedent, the matron had no occasion to refer the sister's request (of which she was not in favour). Is it just that a matron should be placed in power over 300 women workers, when her professional ethics are diametrically opposed to their conscientious convictions? In our opinion it is cruelly unjust.

Miss Bryan writes: "Had the committee granted the request," &c. But they did not grant it. They supported the London Hospital anti-registration policy, of which they are aware their matron is in favour.—Ed.]

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Kindly allow me space in your valuable paper to say how surprised, not to say disgusted, I was to learn that the governors of St. Bartholomew's Hospital had refused to allow the library to be used by the nursing staff, as heretofore, for the discussion of so important a subject as the registration of nurses. Even though they might not have quite realised in their own minds the paramount importance of this subject,

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