

disaster will, without doubt, overtake the lot of Trained Nurses and the Sick.

Yours faithfully,

E. A. STEVENSON,

"Bay View,"

Hon. Secretary.

Johnshaven, Kincardineshire.

CONSCIENTIOUS PROFESSIONAL CONVICTIONS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—In these wobbling times, when so few people apparently are firmly convinced of anything, I wish to thank you for the clear lead you have given us, in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, on the proposal made by the Hon. Arthur Stanley to once more attempt to organise the Nursing Profession on a voluntary basis. With you, I am firmly convinced this can never be effectively done, and any such scheme at this time in the history of nursing organisation can only be a makeshift, and will not satisfy those of us who have conscientious professional convictions. We have had enough makeshifts in this country, and many of us have grown old in watching their failure. What is imperative considering the contending interests in the nursing world is that the State should authorise the Governing Body—thus giving legal status to registered nurses—and that it should be left to that body to gradually define nursing qualifications during the three years' term of grace provided for in the Nurses' Registration Bill. I fear the new Nursing College Scheme is bound to be an apple of discord. We registrationists know it can have little real influence either on nursing education or discipline. I for one should only register under a legal system, and there are thousands of like mind; so that no real co-operation can be hoped for unless the State defines nursing qualifications. Presumably hospital Committees helping to nominate the Managing Board could compel their nurses to submit to its jurisdiction so long as they were under their authority, but they have not a scrap of right to control them unless they are in their paid service.

The present scheme comes dangerously near to coercion—it certainly proposes to tamper with personal liberty—and I should resist its influence on these grounds, if not on others. Under the Nurses' Registration Bill no nurse need register her present qualification or submit to the examination defined by the Central Nursing Council unless she chooses. Lord Knutsford has told us on several occasions no London Hospital nurse would ever submit to the indignity of such a test—that there will always be "London Hospital" nurses, whatever happens to the common herd! Yet every London Hospital nurse I have ever spoken to is a convinced registrationist. We have no wish to coerce anyone, our Bill is not compulsory; but my experience of hospital committees is that their regulations usually are. If only large hospital committees would realise that the registrationists are not revolutionists, but primarily

educationalists, they would be less fearful of the results of legislation. Anyway, I shall go on working for organisation by the State, even if I do not live to see the result of such beneficent legislation, and I hope others will be equally steadfast.

Yours truly,

New Southgate.

H. HAWKINS.

A PROFESSIONAL QUESTION WITH VITAL ISSUES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I have carefully read the proposals set forth in the Hon. Arthur Stanley's circular letter, which was published in the JOURNAL on January 8th. Can you make it quite plain to nurses that the proposed Council of Management for our profession is to be *nominated* and not *elected* as provided for in the Nurses' Registration Bill? Thus the rank and file will be governed without their consent, and they will have no redress. This is a most undemocratic and dangerous principle, and quite out of touch with the feeling of the age. I am not questioning the good intentions of the proposer of this new scheme, but quite frankly we working women cannot agree to be governed by the leisured classes, and this is what the proposal amounts to. No one can have realised the result of such government through the Joint War Committee without realising how bitter is the feeling amongst trained nurses at the invidious position in which in many instances they have been placed, and how deeply they resent the patronage of men and women who may mean well but who have no real respect for working women. I shook the dust of the Red Cross Society off my plebeian shoes in the early days of the War, and hope the registrationists will do all in their power to oppose the constitution of any governing body for our profession which is not largely elective, and which does not provide the safeguard of self-government for the workers through State authority.

Yours truly,

E. W.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—As Miss Kent so ably championed the cause of State Registration recently in the *Daily Telegraph*, I would like to suggest she might point out to the public: that nowadays as hospital committees appoint Matrons who do not hold with the traditions and views of the training schools over which they are to preside, Lord Knutsford's announcement, that Matrons of large London hospitals are opposed to State Registration, only means they are so *individually* as Matrons of the hospital, and have no right to pledge the members of the nursing staff.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

A MEMBER OF THE STATE REGISTRATION
SOCIETY.

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