

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.

MISS SWIFT'S LETTER TO MISS LEE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—On reading Miss Swift's reply to Miss Clara Lee in the Journal of the 29th ult. one is at once impressed by the weakness of the cause she is trying to plead. So weak, indeed, that powerlessness is reflected in the number of ambiguous phrases and sentences strung together to appear both imposing and persuasive.

A whole paragraph is devoted to Mr. Stanley's interest "in several general hospitals" and his position as Chairman of the Joint War Committee. Now, with all due respect to Mr. Stanley, and what he has done (which no one seeks to question), there is no just reason why he should desire to dominate, regulate, educate, and dictate to the whole hospital and nursing world outside a few English hospitals.

In the next paragraph Miss Swift gives it as her opinion that it is useless to be "like children crying for what we cannot obtain meantime." This statement shows a strange want of knowledge of children, who do not cry for what they know they cannot and will not get, but who cry for what they know they will get if they only persevere in crying!

The scheme in question may meet all the requirements desired by Miss Swift, but it certainly will not meet the requirements of a large body of trained nurses who are supported by the medical profession as a whole. Naturally she desires "unity," but it is that form of unity which will fall in with, and further the ends of, the scheme in which she is interested.

"The question of consulting the individual nurse will come later." No sane nurse is likely to be blinded by this sentiment. The reference to "recognition" which is to come "later on" is even more unsatisfactory. What that "recognition" means Miss Swift does not tell us, but no doubt if she meant by that term State Registration she would have expressed herself more distinctly.

The skeleton of the old anti-registration "directory" or whatever it was called, is evidently to be brought out again and have a little flesh put upon its bones and a little breath in its nostrils; but if Miss Swift and those who back it can make no better defence on its behalf than the letter I refer to, they may as well bury it decently, and bring about a "unity" which will appeal to the great majority of those who desire to see justice rule and commonsense guide.

I am, yours faithfully,

Bay View, E. A. STEVENSON.
Johnshaven, Kincardineshire.

THE PRESTIGE OF LEGAL STATUS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I hold a certificate for three years' training from St. Bartholomew's Hospital, signed by the late Matron, Miss Isla Stewart, a woman revered throughout the nursing world at home and abroad. It, of course, carries with it no legal status, but as evidence of my professional capacity and status it is all I desire, until such time as my qualifications can be registered by a Board possessing the statutory authority conferred upon it under a Nurses' Registration Act.

Why should a voluntary society be set up to grant Certificates of Proficiency when the House of Lords, and a Select Committee of the House of Commons are convinced that it is in the public interest that nurses should be granted legal status? I, for one, have no use for any such "scrap of paper," signed by the Matrons of St. Thomas's, or Guy's, or the London Hospitals, or even by Princesses or Duchesses or "other persons interested in nursing education," and I feel sure all Bart's Nurses will sympathize with this point of view. The Bart's certificate is good enough for us, until the State, after a Central Examination, grants "Certificates of Proficiency in Nursing" which carry with them the prestige conferred by legal status. Even then we shall value our school certificate, as Registered Nurses do in the United States.

The idea of a nominated voluntary Council of Management, even if composed of all the Matrons in the Metropolis (a position I have myself held) leaves me cold. Why should I, or any other trained nurse be controlled by them? What we want is legal status, and a Certificate of Proficiency signed by the direct representatives of registered nurses. Nothing more and nothing less.

I am, Dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

MARGARET BREAY,

Cert. St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

NO RIGHT TO INTERFERE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—May I point out to your readers two very important facts which may possibly be overlooked in regard to this fresh attempt upon the liberties of the nursing profession. The Joint War Committee (on which there is not one trained nurse) is apparently responsible for this scheme, is composed of representatives of the Order of St. John and the British Red Cross Society, and St. John Ambulance Association part of its constitution does not recognise any but medical practitioners as teachers of Nursing. Therefore, according to their ruling no nurse, however expert in her own profession, is capable of teaching even its elements, whilst a medical man with no knowledge of practical nursing, may, and does try to teach it—to totally untrained women. Often one hears of a doctor giving

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