

Nurses by giving the title of Registered Nurse. State Registration of Graduate Nurses is one of the corner-stones of our profession, as it has elevated the standard of the education of the trained nurse by improving the instruction given in the training schools."

Another (Miss Anna Jammé, largely instrumental in getting the Bill through in California): "We all know what an education State Registration has been to us."

Another: "The ideal administration of a Nurse Registration Law will be a Board of Nurses. Nurses will alone give the time, thought and sympathy necessary to constructive work, and whatever the failings and shortcomings, we will meet the demand upon us. After all, why should others administer the law that only we have worked for?"

An opponent of ours has recently said that we need not go to America to learn what is best for nurses in this country. I emphatically denounce that narrow and prejudiced opinion. I can only say—and I speak with authority, for I have made a study of these things in America—that I have learnt much from our American cousins, and I told them so. I returned to England with a mind enriched, and feeling humbly thankful that I had had such a golden opportunity. The contrast between what I have seen and learnt in America, and the state of things in this country, is so sharp that it has saddened me and made me ashamed.

Now, my sisters, what is to prevent our getting this most urgent reform, our case being such a good one? Nothing at all but our own apathy and indifference. I say we, because I have been ignorant and apathetic myself in the past, but I have repented long since. For more than twenty-five years a body of women has been working strenuously and unremittingly to bring about this great reform.

I think we ought to frequently remind ourselves of this. Is it conceivable that we are going to allow this time-honoured work, with all the courage, devotion, splendid energy, and purity of motive that lie behind it, to be swept aside like the crumbs off a dining-table for this ephemeral scheme of a day? Are we going to allow this great educational edifice, which is being built for posterity upon the corner-stones of aspirations and practical idealism, to be destroyed? Such iconoclasm to me would be inconceivable, and to you too, I am sure.

We have read the Stanley scheme, we have read the lines and between the lines, and we are not such fools that we cannot understand what it means. Its purpose is to subjugate, not enfranchise, the nursing profession. We will have none of it; we will fight it to the death. It is mean, because it is such a cowardly attack; it is tyrannical and interfering.

The most remarkable part of that Letter, perhaps, is the fifth paragraph, which shows such lack of logic. Mr. Stanley enumerates all those bodies of professional men (who, by the way, are State Registered) who organize the teaching and

examination of candidates, and goes on to show how we are to be a voluntary body and not State Registered. Our profession is worthy of a higher status and firmer basis than that. The fundamental principle of State Registration for Nurses is, as Mrs. Fenwick has said, "self-government"—the government of the profession by the profession under an authority appointed by the State.

It is our duty to vindicate our own belief in "the perfect law of liberty" which is being so cruelly perverted in the present day. Let us remember that "the spirit of liberty is never defeated, whether in chains or in laurels."

Again I say, this is no time for wobbling, we must meet the demands of our consciences sternly and unwaveringly as Registrationists. This is our day of opportunity and responsibility.

DISCUSSION.

The Resolution having been proposed and seconded, the President announced that it was now open for discussion, and that the views of members would be welcome, whether they were in favour of the Resolution or the reverse.

Miss J. C. CHILD, who is at present in this country as a member of the South African Military Nursing Service, endorsed the view expressed by Mrs. Holgate, of New Zealand, in her telegram, and said that to one trained in this country, and in the fight for registration at the beginning at home, and now working in South Africa, it was very disheartening to feel that while so many of the colonies, including those in South Africa, had obtained registration, the mother country, where it was initiated over a quarter of a century ago still remained behind, so that nurses coming to South Africa must now pass an examination before beginning to practise there, if they wished to rank as professional nurses. She hoped those who had proposed this scheme for a voluntary Nursing College would support the Bill for the State Registration of Nurses. They would not advance in any other way. If they wished to do trained nurses a good turn they would drop their scheme and help to get the Nurses' Registration Bill through Parliament.

MRS. LANCELOT ANDREWS heartily supported the Resolution. She thought the Letter showed very plainly the vagaries into which its promoters would be led if they endeavoured to carry out the scheme outlined. In one paragraph it was stated to be a voluntary scheme, but according to others the Council of the College was to form an examination board, grant a certificate of proficiency to nurses, and in addition to examining and giving qualifications to nurses, it was to take power to exercise similar functions in all branches of women's work connected with hospitals. She seemed to see the certificate of the College given to as many classes of workers as were incorporated in Lord Derby's scheme. It might be bestowed on all classes from the trained nurses

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)