

and shaken by the power and pleasure of the will. The spirit of nurses is not broken, in spite of the many years that they have—under able leadership—been fighting the good fight with all their might.

BEATRICE KENT.

#### A REPLY TO MISS F. A. SHELDON.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Miss F. A. Sheldon writes in last week's issue "the whole history of women's work shows lack of combination"—I agree—"and wise leadership is wanted"—again I agree; but such leadership must be chosen by the workers themselves not self-appointed. We want a democracy rather than autocracy. Societies are "impersonal things." Nurse societies are composed of nurses themselves, and their leaders in such societies are their chosen and independent representatives; but what can we say of their training schools? Their relation to the nurse is that of employer and employed, teacher and pupil, a mutual benefit arrangement; but what nurse would expect a hospital committee or its officials to fight her battles when she starts out "on her own" in the world outside hospital? Would they, for instance, attempt to get her well housed, well paid and such like? Of course not. They would say that was only their business within their own walls. They ought not to spend time or money on championing nurses any more than they would other of their employees; their funds are trust funds for the service of the sick.

Improvements in conditions of service have taken place for several reasons, such as

1. Opening of other branches of women's work, and therefore scarcity of probationers.
2. In response to a better public opinion of what is just to workers in all kinds of work.

The relation between a nurse and the hospital where she trained is a sentimental one, and valuable as such, a nurse holds her training school in sincere affection; but surely neither Matron nor committee can undertake any responsibility for her affairs when she leaves, except by way of recommendation.

Now, as to the relation of a Matron to the College of Nursing, Ltd. Suppose the College were to take a line of action opposed to the pecuniary interest of the hospital of which she is an official, and she were told to have nothing to do with it. Could she resist? Must she not either submit or resign? How can she, therefore, act as a free agent in charge of the trained nurses' interests when as an official she is not a free agent?

One thing more as to the value of the College of Nursing. Such educating centres, after the passing of a State Registration Bill, will be necessary, and provided the trained nurses' interests are carefully safeguarded such educational centres may do excellent service—but until then? What can the College do for trained nurses in return for their money and support? I can understand its use to hospitals, and those in charge of nurses' training,

as it can save them the trouble and expense of examination, and no doubt presently of teaching, but I cannot see that it has any value in itself for nurses who have trained.

May I say, in conclusion, that some of us cannot but feel rather doubtful of the *bona fides* of those who promote the College of Nursing when we see on the Council the names of so many that in the past we have known as convinced opponents of State Registration for Nurses. What has converted them? And are they really converted to the fundamental principles of effective legislation?

Rather is it not more true that the new movement is one of self-protection upon the part of hospital committees, that it is feared that the nurses will organise themselves and become increasingly powerful through self-government, and that it is more than likely that the cheap labour hitherto freely given to hospitals will be restricted, and a more just system as between employees and employer demanded; and that economic control of the nursing profession is therefore imperative if existing conditions so beneficial to the hospitals are to continue?

H. L. PEARSE.

#### REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Miss A. Wilkinson.—T.N.T. stands for tri-nitro-toluol, used in munition factories. It has caused death to those susceptible to the poison, and once a person has had T.N.T. jaundice he or she should never return to work where they may be affected by it.

The Editor has received a number of letters strongly objecting to the incorporation by Act of Parliament of the College of Nursing, Ltd., as the Governing Body of the Nursing Profession. These letters cannot appear, as no name or address is enclosed as a guarantee of good faith.

#### OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

November 4th.—What do you know of chorea, its mode of development, the diseases to which it is allied, and the nursing care necessary?

November 11th.—What are the causes of Nasal Hemorrhage? and how is it treated?

November 18th.—What is Asthma? State symptoms and how alleviated.

November 25th.—What do you know about Venereal Disease? How would you help to stamp it out?

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