

conduct of business. Frankly, this is unfair. If by inadvertence, reports are published which are not correct, the person named should have the right of reply. I had hoped *The Lancet* would have agreed with this ethical journalistic standpoint. From the lay press, generously subsidised by our opponents, we have ceased to expect fair play.

"I shall do myself the justice of publishing my reply to *The Lancet* in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING."

Letter sent to the Editor of "The Lancet" by MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, President of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses.

REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

SIR,—I observe that in your last issue, July 6th, you refer to the character of the proceedings at recent meetings of the College of Nursing, Ltd., and the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses. The single object of the latter Society since its inception in 1902 has been "To obtain an Act of Parliament providing for the Legal Registration of Trained Nurses," and it naturally restricted itself to the question of Nurses' Registration at its annual business meeting.

The College of Nursing, Ltd., which purports to control Nursing Education, together with Registration and Discipline, and also to associate the members of the Nursing Profession under its direction, at its recent Conference chose a wider field for discussion.

As you refer to my statement made at the former meeting, that the Society for the State Registration of Nurses had never been obstructionist, adding, "now is evidently the time to give practical proof of this," I feel sure you will grant me the opportunity of disabusing your readers of a wrong impression.

The Society for the State Registration of Nurses, which first drafted a Nurses' Registration Bill, passed in 1908 by the House of Lords, and read a first time under the ten minutes' rule in the House of Commons in 1914 with a majority of 229, has stood, and will continue to stand, for fundamental principles of good government in any Nurses' Registration Bill to which it gives its support. In opposing five successive drafts of the Bill promoted by the College of Nursing, Ltd., we have so far acted in protection of the interests of the Nursing Profession as a whole, the four vital principles for which we contend having been omitted from the drafts. Fighting for principles is not obstruction.

You state further that "A resolution was passed . . . and sent up to the Central Committee for State Registration, which contained a clause dissociating the Society from the College of Nursing . . . but an amendment to secure freedom from "the domination" of the College of Nursing without dissociation from it "was not accepted by the Chair."

May I explain that my Society is not, and never has been, associated with the College of Nursing, and that the amendment to which you allude was not accepted by me as Chairman, as it was pro-

posed by a person who was not a member of the Society, and was therefore not in order.

May I express my appreciation of your statements "we have every confidence in the ability of nurses to settle their own polity without help from outside . . . and "Nothing is more certain than that the profession of nursing is likely to undergo profound changes within the next few years, and, provided that it is placed in a position to manage its own affairs plasticity is altogether desirable."

It is this power of self-determination and plasticity for which the organised Societies of Nurses grouped in the Central Committee are contending, and which will be rendered impossible if the College of Nursing, Ltd., and its present restrictive and inelastic Memorandum and Articles of Association are incorporated in an Act of Parliament, bestowing upon it powers exercised in the Medical Profession by three separate bodies, which maintain the balance of power in that profession, *i.e.*, the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons (Education) the General Medical Council (Registration and Discipline) and the British Medical Association (free action in the body politic).

The Constitution of the College of Nursing, Ltd., (a company of laymen) is calculated to establish a Nursing monopoly, which in our opinion would undermine the professional and economic independence of the Nursing Profession.

We claim in our Bill a democratic and independent Governing Body authorised by Act of Parliament, entirely free from the restrictive Constitution of the College of Nursing, Ltd., and this principle of democratic organisation we must continue to support. Hoping for the sympathy of *The Lancet* for our professional claims.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

ETHEL G. FENWICK,
President.

As this explanation has not been inserted, the readers of *The Lancet* are left to assume that the members of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, who have largely inspired, and paid for, the campaign for nursing reform for the protection of the public, and the nursing profession, are contumacious obstructionists, and its President incapable of conducting its business without prejudice.

A most unmerited aspersion upon the public-spirited character of the Society, and one we cannot permit to pass without protest.

WEDDING BELLS.

At the reception held after the wedding of Mr. Cyril Thatcher to Miss Ethel Benjamin, Assistant Commandant of the Women's Legion, the bride was presented by the wife of the Serbian Minister with the Order of the Royal Red Cross of Serbia, in recognition of her services to that country.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)