

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.

THE TEACHING OF OLIVE SCHREINER.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Thank you for your appreciation of Olive Schreiner's "Story of an African Farm." I commend to all nurses her "Dreams." It is a wonderful collection of very beautiful short readings, which I have used for the past three years in connection with successive classes of preliminary Training School Pupils, during sewing lessons, splints or linen. So far, none of them knew it, but many of them have since obtained it, as well as others of her writing.

In particular, "Three Dreams in a Desert" seem to apply to our present struggle for professional freedom, and the description of the locust crossing a stream is graphically told—the first pioneers are swept away, *they make the track to the water's edge*; the next ones form a bridge with their bodies over which the rest pass to the land of freedom.

All our thanks are due to those who formed and marked out the difficult trail by which we are fast reaching the Land of Freedom. We all too readily forget that the trail had to be blazed.

I am,

Yours very faithfully,

SISTER TUTOR.

General Hospital, Nottingham.

NURSING HISTORY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—In THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, dated September 17th, I notice that you have reported a letter sent to nurses by a firm of chemists.

You point out that no nurse can yet claim the title of "Registered Nurse," and that probably the firm of chemists is under the impression that "Nurses who are on the Register of the College of Nursing, Ltd., are empowered to use the professional title of Registered Nurse."

You express the opinion "that it is high time the College of Nursing Council took steps to substitute a Roll of Members for their so-called Register, and thus cease to mislead the profession and the public as to the present status of a Registered Nurse."

Though I am a member of the College of Nursing, I am not writing to contest the right of our Council to maintain our Register, but to ask you, on behalf of a few other nurses as well as for my own information, why (as you say no nurse has yet the right to say she is a "Registered Nurse"), there

has been advertised in your paper week after week, "The Registered Nurses' Society"? The advertisement states that the Society has been in existence for twenty-seven years. Is this correct to call it "The Registered Nurses' Society," if as yet there are no "Registered Nurses"? In the issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING of July 23rd, 1921, you report a letter sent to the Minister of Health by the "Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council." If, as you say, the College of Nursing is misleading the public in keeping a Register of Trained Nurses, perhaps you will kindly explain why any other body of nurses has a right to style themselves "The Registered Nurses' Society," or "The Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council" these titles seeming to us more misleading than the fact of the College Council keeping a Register of Trained Nurses. It will enlighten a few puzzled nurses if you will kindly publish this letter and your answer to our question.

Yours truly,

Edinburgh.

AN INQUIRER.

[We have pleasure in replying in full to the enquiries of our correspondent, especially as we must refer to nursing history, of which unfortunately the profession as a whole is so deplorably ignorant.

In the year 1887—thirty-four years ago—the British Nurses' Association (later granted the prefix Royal) was founded by a few pioneer Matrons, the first object of which was to "promote a system of Registration of Nurses." In the year 1890 the Association began a system of Registration, and at the end of a six months' "period of grace," three years' hospital training was made an essential condition of Registration.

The Association compiled and published the first "Register of Trained Nurses" in 1891, and asserted two great principles:—(1) That the public should be protected against unskilled nursing by untrustworthy women. (2) That the control of the nursing profession should be in professional hands. A copy of that publication is before us, and it is interesting to note that amongst the members composing the Registration Board we find the names of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, who (thirty years later) is a member of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and of Miss Margaret Huxley, who is Vice-Chairman of the General Nursing Council for Ireland. Also that of Dr. Priestley—late Sir William—the father of Mr. J. C. Priestley, K.C., the Chairman of the English Nursing Council. But to return.

In the year 1894, having been incorporated by Royal Charter, which gave it the right to compile a Register, the Royal British Nurses' Association, realising how unfairly private nurses were exploited by hospitals, institutions, and individuals, organised a private nurses' co-operation under the title of the "Registered Nurses' Society," whereby the registered members of the Association were enabled to secure full remuneration for their

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)