

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME.

Miss F. A. Sheldon, Registrar, College of Nursing, Ltd., sends the following letter to *Time and Tide*, February 2nd. An ample apology to its readers for her former inaccurate statements would have been more becoming:—

NURSES' REGISTRATION ACT.

SIR,—In sending a letter to your issue of January 12th on the Existing Nurse I wrote as a Nurse interested in a number of my fellow nurses, and made the request, which was overlooked, that my private address might be printed.

May I say to your correspondent (January 19th) that I regret that in connection with the applicants with one year's training I used the word Certificate.

Documentary evidence (signed by a responsible official of the Hospital) is the correct statement, but the distinction is immaterial for the purpose of argument.

The champions of the Existing Nurse ask why, if this *Documentary evidence* of training extending over one year is accepted as part of the proof of "adequate knowledge and experience" in nursing the sick, the claim is denied to women, with twenty years' practice in nursing men and women (medical and surgical cases) to their credit, who cannot adduce this particular bit of evidence of "training." Surely every doctor and every nurse never ceases to be acquiring knowledge so long as actively prosecuting their profession of tending the sick. Cannot all the knowledge and experience be put in the balance to make up for the want of this special documentary evidence to which your correspondent attaches such supreme importance?

It is almost impossible to imagine that anyone seriously believes that the registration up to next July of these older women, making their livelihood as nurses in practice, would mean "a continuance of any reprehensible system" in the nursing of rich or poor, or that the inquiry addressed by the Central Joint V.A.D. Committee to the General Nursing Council, August, 1920, has any real bearing on the subject under discussion except so far as it may serve to impart a prejudice.

The College of Nursing is not a thing apart of evil intent, but a body of over 22,000 women who desire, and by association derive mutual help towards, the furtherance of their chosen calling.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

63, Wimpole Street, W. 1.

F. A. SHELDON.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick is of opinion that "charity begins at home," and that the College champions of the untrained nurses would prove their good faith by placing them on the College Register (from which they are rigorously excluded) before attempting to depreciate the State Register and delude the public.

THE NURSES' REGISTRATION ACT AND THE EXISTING NURSE.

To the Editor *Time and Tide*.

SIR,—Miss F. A. Sheldon (Registrar, College of Nursing, Ltd.) refers in your issue of last week to my refutation of her former mis-statements concerning the Rules drafted by the late General Nursing Council for England and Wales, for the admission of Existing Nurses to the General Part of the Register.

The late Council accepted the very minimum of knowledge, compatible with safety to the sick public, in placing on the Register any respectable uncerti-

ficated applicants with one year's instruction in their responsible duties. The College of Nursing, Ltd., in compiling and issuing the rival Register which it maintains, professes to uphold the three years' standard of training and certification, to which trained nurses have been compelled to conform for the past thirty to forty years. Let the College Council "champion" these totally untrained nurses by placing them on their own list. The champions of State Registration might then have some faith in the integrity of their demand that these women shall be given the Statutory title of "Registered Nurse," but the fact is that they have strenuously excluded this class of worker from the College Register, and from participation in the benefits from the huge sum of money collected in the name of the Nation's Nurses.

Miss Sheldon writes: "Surely every doctor and every nurse never ceases to be acquiring knowledge so long as actively prosecuting their profession of tending the sick"—a most misleading and deceptive argument.

A doctor goes on acquiring knowledge founded on the basis of five years' theoretical and practical study, followed by examination and registration. A nurse who has had no general training or instruction may go on acquiring knowledge built up on ignorance, at the expense of the patient, "so long as actively prosecuting her profession of tending the sick," and may still be a very dangerous person, having no theoretical basis on which to build up her practice.

A medical practitioner has recently aroused a flutter in the dovecotes of medical circles by retailing some of the "accidents" in surgical practice known to him personally.

I have little doubt what the sensations of the public would be, if the pioneers of nursing reform retailed some of the fatal and heartrending results to life and limb of unskilled nursing practice, which have been one great incentive in their thirty years' struggle for the Organisation of Trained Nursing by the State.

It would, indeed, be tragic reading.

It is high time that intelligent women, excluded as they are from effective participation in the management of voluntary hospitals, bestowed some conscientious consideration upon questions of nursing ethics and nursing economics. A knowledge of the question of safe standards of nursing for the whole community is a serious civic duty.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

ETHEL G. FENWICK,

Registered Nurse.

20, Upper Wimpole Street,
London, W.1.

LEAGUE JOURNALS.

League journals edited by trained nurses should keep members of the League in touch with professional views. Some do—some don't. We note an excellent article by Miss Julia Hurlston in the *Victoria and Bournemouth Nurses' League Journal*, on the ethics of the now past Election of the G.N.C. All her hopes for self-government, nursing standards and justice have been squandered by Rule 9 (A) for the time being.

The highly qualified, certificated members of the above Private Nurses' League are now "represented" by a College nominee—a private nurse without a certificate! We hope they appreciate the economic damage of the selection!

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