

COMING EVENTS.

May 14th.—Infectious Hospitals Matrons' Association. Annual Meeting. South-Eastern Hospital, New Cross, London, S.E., 2.30 p.m.

May 19th.—Meeting of Round Table Committee of the British College of Nurses, 39, Portland Place, London, W., 3.30 p.m.

May 21st.—The British College of Nurses. Council Meeting, 39, Portland Place, London, W., 2.30 p.m.

May 27th.—General Nursing Council for England and Wales. Monthly meeting, 23, Portland Place, London, W.1, 2.30 p.m.

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.

A BLOW TO NURSING PRESTIGE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.
Guy's Hospital, S.E.1.
April 25th, 1938.

DEAR MADAM,—May I ask the hospitality of your paper to make clear a few misunderstandings which seem to me to be present in your article, "A Blow to Nursing Prestige," regarding the division of the Preliminary State Examination, in the April issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

(1) To take Part I of the Preliminary State Examination before entrance to hospital is entirely optional. A large number of candidates whom this special arrangement does not suit, will, without doubt, continue to enter hospital and take the Preliminary State Examination, as at present, after following the usual hospital curriculum.

(2) Although it is now *permissible* for instruction according to the syllabus of the General Nursing Council to be given by educational bodies apart from hospitals, *the examination, as before, will be conducted by the General Nursing Council.*

(3) Matrons will be entirely free, as they are now, to accept or refuse any candidate presenting herself to them, irrespective of the fact that she has passed or not passed in Part I of the Preliminary State Examination.

(4) Should doctors be properly described as lay persons? Medicine and nursing are twin brother and sister in the same great profession—the care of the sick. If Medical men are considered to be professional persons, desirable and worthy to teach and examine our nurses, should they not be considered as professional persons, desirable and worthy to express an opinion on matters concerning the education of nurses in preparation for their examinations?

Believe me, yours truly,

EMILY E. MACMANUS.

[We have to thank Miss E. E. MacManus for her explanatory letter in reference to our article on "A Blow to Nursing Prestige," which appeared in our last issue, in which we must claim there were no "misunderstandings." so far as we are concerned.

(1) The Resolution to which we take exception states: "That the Council approve the Division of the Preliminary State Examination . . . which may be taken before entry into a training school, shall include the subjects of Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene." No reference whatever is made in the Resolution to this Examination being optional—or that these subjects will be taught as heretofore in the Nurse Training Schools, as they should be with clinical application through a prescribed curriculum—by professional teachers.

(2) Miss MacManus agrees that the Resolution makes it "*permissible* for (undefined) Educational Bodies, apart

from hospitals, to give instruction in preparation for the Preliminary Examination."

Thus the safeguard of the "One Portal to the Register" has been swept away—a professional safeguard, secured by the initiators of State Registration—and without which the standardisation of Nursing Education by the General Nursing Council is impossible.

(3) Matrons will, we are informed, "be entirely free to accept or refuse a candidate presenting herself to them, irrespective of the fact that she has passed, or not passed, in Part I of the Preliminary State Examination." Who, may we ask, has endowed Matrons with such powers for the future? Certainly not the G.N.C., which, by Resolution, has destroyed its Central Control of Nursing Education—and we doubt if the Governors of hospitals will find themselves capable of enforcing any such discretion once candidates apply for training with the evidence that they have passed the prescribed Preliminary Examination in hand. Upon what excuse can such applicants be turned down? The onus of such refusal will bring the Matron up against not only the "Educational Bodies" recognised by the G.N.C., but, moreover, against the infuriated parents of the certificated applicants excluded from the necessary hospital training required to qualify them, as Registered Nurses, for the exercise of a profession through which they intend to earn their living. We fear Matrons will find the position in this connection far from "entirely free."

(4) Doctors of medicine are not professional persons as defined in the Nurses' Registration Acts any more than Registered Nurses can claim to be registered medical practitioners under the Medical Acts—and "twin brothers" or not, they are not eligible for election on to the General Nursing Council. The nine persons—teachers, peeresses and practitioners—nominated by the various Government Departments act as members of the laity on the General Nursing Council, and by their unanimous vote to divide the theoretical and practical education of nurses, have, in their present disastrous policy, proved unworthy in our opinion "to express an opinion on matters concerning the education of nurses in preparation for their examination."

Moreover, the nominated members of the G.N.C. have no financial responsibility. They contribute nothing and all their out-of-pocket expenses are paid by the Registered Nurses. The Registered Nurses finance their own professional affairs to the extent of nearly £50,000 per annum, and in our opinion the time has come when their elected representatives should control professional business. Why in this connection has a schoolmistress been elected Chair of the Finance Committee?

Let us hope that the day is not far distant when Registered Nurses will appreciate, as other professions do, that it is their *duty* to exercise self-determination in the conduct of their profession. The smashing down of the One Portal to the Nurses' Register by the laity is a lesson which must be taken to heart.—ED.]

MASKED NURSES.

Suffolk House Maternity Home,
Stanmore.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.
DEAR MADAM,

It was with disgust I read of the procession of masked nurses in the Strand. Whilst wishing for many reforms in the Nursing Profession, we do not want the Profession degraded by the spirit of Trade Unionism. Our own governing body, the General Nursing Council, can form regulations as regards working hours. Surely we do not need an Act of Parliament to *enforce* hours for those who wish to attend the sick, and who love their work. Where

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