

Nursing Echoes.

* * * *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*



It is noteworthy that while the pros and cons of the registration question are being discussed in this country, that the Local Government Boards for both Ireland and Scotland have found, in practice, the need for registration so urgent that in each of these countries the above Boards maintain a register of their own. We have recently inspected a copy of the certificate issued by the Irish Local Government, a most tasteful document on parchment paper with the Royal Arms at the top, and the seal of the Board in a device of shamrocks in the left hand corner. The certificate states that the possessor "is registered by the Local Government Board for Ireland as a Trained Nurse, pursuant to section 58 (2, a ii.) of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898."

It is not surprising that, in default of a system of State Registration, Government offices dealing with the nursing of the sick have found it necessary to establish registers of their own, and the Local Government Boards in Scotland and Ireland are to be congratulated on their endeavour to protect the sick from ignorant and incompetent nurses. At the same time, there is urgent need of a Nursing Act on the same lines as the Medical Act of 1858 "to regulate the qualifications" of persons acting as nurses. The Medical Act asserts that "it is expedient that persons requiring medical aid should be enabled to distinguish qualified from unqualified practitioners," and under the Act the use of the title "legally qualified medical practitioner," "duly qualified medical practitioner," or any words implying that a person is a member of the medical profession indicates that a person is registered under the Act.

It is difficult to realise that it is little over half a century since the registration of medical practitioners was accomplished, or the injury which would be inflicted upon the sick public if there were no means of distinguishing qualified from unqualified practitioners. No doubt in another fifty years it will be equally difficult to estimate the present disorganised condition of nursing; meanwhile it is the duty of all who realise the suffering caused to the sick by the lack of any standard of nursing education, and of any reliable Register of Trained

Nurses, to work to obtain a Nursing Act providing for the registration of duly qualified nurses.

The circumstances of the death of a boy at St. Thomas's Hospital during the administration of an anæsthetic were on Monday investigated at an inquest in the Lambeth Coroner's Court. The jury in returning a verdict of accidental death added that there ought to be in the hospital some better system of ascertaining if a patient were fit to be put under an anæsthetic.

It would appear that the boy was prepared for the anæsthetic by his parents in accordance with medical directions. The administration of anæsthetics to out-patients is a question fraught with difficulty, and no doubt it is a merciful procedure in a minor operation to give a "whiff of chloroform" or some other anæsthetic. But all nurses know how much successful administration depends upon the careful preparation of the patient by competent persons. The pores of the skin should be cleansed by a warm bath, free action of the bowels secured, the urine tested for sugar and albumen, light diet be given previously so that the stomach may not be loaded and press upon the diaphragm, and the patient be kept in bed, at any rate on the day of the operation, to avoid any exertion. All these points will be attended to as a routine practice in the case of in-patients, as well as the medical examination of the condition of the heart and lungs. Even after all precautions have been taken, alarming conditions will occasionally supervene. How much more likely they are to occur when the previous preparation has been carried out by parents, ignorant of all the necessary technique, will be readily comprehended.

Miss Bridger, Matron at the Swans a Hospital, who is leaving to take up an appointment at Malta, has been made the recipient of valedictory gifts from her colleagues on the staff, who sincerely regret her departure. During the two years that Miss Bridger had been Matron her relations with the staff have been of the most cordial description, and these gifts were intended as a memento of that period, as well as to signify the esteem which the recipient had won from her colleagues. The presents consisted of a massive solid silver teapot, given by past and present sisters and nurses, and a solid silver cream jug and sugar basin, in cases, by the porters, engineer, and servants. The gifts were simply left in Miss Bridger's room, there being no formal presentation.

The Swansea Hospital Board have, we regret to find, arranged to start a private nursing department in connection with the Hospital on the motion of Dr. Brook, who, apparently, considers it justifiable to make money for a charity out of nursing labour.

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