

nurses and ignorant persons who assume that title; and, "Whereas, This is a fruitful source of injury to the sick and of discredit to the nursing profession, it is the opinion of this International Congress of Nurses, in general meeting assembled, that it is the duty of the nursing profession of every country to work for suitable legislative enactment regulating the education of nurses and protecting the interests of the public, by securing State examinations and public registration, with the proper penalties for enforcing the same."

Acts providing for the Registration of Trained Nurses have been passed, and are now in operation, in Cape Colony, Natal, New Zealand, and in four States in America, and similar legislation is being discussed in other countries. It is evident, therefore, that the advisability of such a measure is widely recognised.

It is sometimes urged in objection to the Registration of Nurses that such a system would deprive the public of the services of a useful class of workers, namely, attendants with some nursing knowledge. The Bill, already alluded to, expressly provides that the measure shall not affect or apply to any person who nurses the sick for hire but does not in any way assume to be a registered nurse. There is room for all grades of workers, but employers should be able to ascertain which grade they are actually employing.

It is only right to call attention to the fact that there is in this country a well-organised opposition to the Registration of Nurses. This emanates chiefly from some of the general hospitals in London. It may, however, be fairly argued that the primary object of such hospitals is not the education of nurses, but to nurse the sick in their own wards in the most economical manner.

Further, it is obvious that these hospitals, which are practically unaffected by the present disorganised condition of nursing outside their walls, have no right to prevent the public being protected from existing evils, or to prevent organisation amongst thousands of nurses whom they neither control nor employ.

But, in view of the attitude assumed by some of the hospitals and of the public and professional importance of the subject, we are of opinion that it is desirable there should be an independent inquiry into the whole nursing question. By such means the reasons for and against legislation could be elicited before legislation was attempted. Therefore it is strongly urged that a Select Committee of the House of Commons should be appointed to inquire into the whole matter, and to consider the two Bills for the Registration of Nurses which are now before the House.

### "Hogmanay."

A NEW YEAR HAS DAWNED, and as one automatically reflects on the past year, to see what has been achieved, or what mistakes have been made, so do thoughts turn to the future, and the destinies that lie ahead. There are many who will remember joyfully the resolutions which last year reached fulfilment, or perhaps recall regretfully, the good intentions that somehow went astray. Much attention will be given to those vows to which we intend to dedicate ourselves in the coming year, for there is surely something rather special in the "making" or "breaking" of a New Year resolution, for in these simple vows, which we voluntarily resolve to keep—come what may—there lies some small expression of our true character, both towards ourselves and our fellow-beings.

At this time we invariably allow our minds to "turn back the clock," and in so doing, perhaps we try to imagine how the First New Year greeted the light of day and when first it was considered a date worthy of celebration. Much may be conjured up by the imagination regarding its Pre-Christian associations, however we do know that the boughs of mistletoe linked with the Twelve Days Festival, figured

prominently in ancient times, when, on the last day of the year, the Druids bore forth from the woods armfuls of mistletoe, and great rejoicing. It is of interest, however, that, despite its age-old popularity, with only one exception, mistletoe has never been hung in the churches in this country, it being considered a heathen plant, tho' to the Scandinavians it is sacred, not only as the instrument of Baldur's death, but also as a plant of peace.

Because of its Pagan associations, early Christians observed the Calends of January as a strict fast, but this was not for long, superstitious belief decreed that a year begun in sorrow, must inevitably end likewise, and so it was that greeting the New Year became an occasion for revelry and the giving of gifts, a time for happiness and renewed hope.

During the Middle Ages, it was heralded by the "Feast of Fools," when classes of the lower clergy presided at burlesque ceremonies, at which time, it being a holiday, there was a reversal of normal procedure. Following the nomination and ordaining of a Bishop and Archbishop of Fools, likewise in burlesque, they were presented to the people. The remainder of the day was spent in revelry within the Church. At the altar they played dice, and feasted on puddings, cakes and sausages, then, in carts, they went in procession through the streets. With the coming of the Reformation, these customs were abolished.

Present day celebrations include the holding of a Watch Night Service in nearly all Churches on New Year's Eve, the bells being pealed immediately after midnight. Ships in port and at sea sound their sirens at twelve o'clock, and wherever people are gathered together, good wishes are exchanged and toasts are drunk. In Scotland, and the north, the custom of "first-footing" is celebrated. The first person to cross the threshold after midnight must be a dark-haired man, bearing with him, gifts of coal, bread or money, to bring good luck to the family during the year. In Scotland January 1st is known, too, as Cake Day, reminiscent of bygone days when masked children paraded the streets, soliciting oat-cakes, with the call of "Hogmanay," and the singing and acting of the "Guisers" or "masquers." As a festival, the New Year also holds pride of place in France, and although the term "Hogmanay" was first recorded in Scotland during the 17th century, it is of French origin, a corruption of the Old French "aquillanent" meaning "to the mistletoe, the New Year," a term of rejoicing derived from the Druids.

Among present day customs, dating from Pre-Christian times, is that of the processional guise-dance, still celebrated at St. Ives in Cornwall, though it now tends to be no more than a noisy celebration, the original meaning having been long forgotten. In bygone days, these dancers with blackened faces and usually accompanied by a person in animal disguise, entered houses and performed all manner of strange antics. Householders took these jollifications all in good part, such visits being thought to bring Good Luck! The name "guisers" comes from the Universal custom of disguising oneself—a desire for secrecy, as found in nearly all ancient ritual dances. Elsewhere, the New Year was, and in some parts still is, heralded by chalking the date of the year on doors and gates, at midnight, which duty is performed also by a troupe of young men with blackened faces.

So much for the Past and Present, and what of the Future? Already we have stepped across the threshold of the New Year, knowing little of the destinies which Fate has planned for each of us. We are "Outward Bound" on a new Voyage of Discovery and sad though we may feel in saying "Good-bye" to the Old Year, our memories of it will remain, and as we set sail into the Future, may God grant that our ship of Goodwill and Contentment will steer a steady course, and will successfully weather the storms which may beset us on our way, and that when we return, our journey will have yielded a wealthy cargo of wisdom, love and understanding.

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