

amend the principle of representation, until finally, in 1886, the General Medical Council was re-constituted upon the basis which we have already explained. Ever since then, however, dissatisfaction has been expressed by medical men, and attempts have been frequently made to obtain an increase in the direct representation of the profession upon the Council; it being argued with considerable force that those who are governed should, in a free country, have a preponderating share, at any rate, in the selection of those who govern them. The general feeling was stated rather forcibly in a Report made last month to the British Medical Association by a strong Committee of that body, and unanimously adopted by the General Meeting of members in the following words: "As at present constituted the General Medical Council does not adequately represent the Medical Profession. It is mainly composed of the representatives of what may be called the privileged classes of the profession and falls far short of what is needed as a central governing body. Its reform may be a difficult task, but it is certain that the profession will never be able to make its views and wishes properly felt so long as this Council remains as it is, and the Committee urges the importance of making this great reform a main policy of the Association." Then an important motion was proposed by Dr. Rentoul, of Liverpool, and unanimously carried at the same meeting, urging upon the British Medical Association to take steps to secure an amendment of the present Medical Acts with a view to obtaining seven additional direct representatives of the medical profession upon the General Medical Council.

Now the moral which we desire to draw from this historical review of the constitution of the General Medical Council is that NO NURSING COUNCIL IS LIKELY TO PROVE PERMANENTLY ACCEPTABLE TO THE NURSING PROFESSION UNLESS IT IS CHIEFLY COMPOSED OF MEMBERS DIRECTLY ELECTED BY THE NURSES THEMSELVES. There can be no valid reason—there are many obvious reasons against it—why the mistake made in the Medical Act of 1858, partly remedied in the Medical Act of 1886, and further amendment of which is now demanded, should be made in the case of Nursing legislation. It surely would be more wise to learn the lesson which this experience teaches and at once to constitute the Nursing Council upon broad and equitable principles, so that it will not need to be tinkered and changed again and again as time goes on. This matter appears to us to lie at the very root of a Nursing Act and it would indeed be difficult to imagine any reason why a system which has proved to be not only inequitable but also unsatisfactory should be adopted in the

Nursing legislation of the future. We start, then, with the suggestion that THE MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BODY, ENTRUSTED WITH THE CONTROL OF THE EDUCATION AND REGISTRATION OF THE NURSING PROFESSION IN THE FUTURE, SHOULD BE REPRESENTATIVES DIRECTLY CHOSEN BY THE REGISTERED NURSES THEMSELVES.

Then we come to an equally important matter and one which has complexities beyond those which exist in the case of the Medical profession. How are the Training Schools for Nurses—which, in effect, correspond, of course, to the Universities and medical Corporations in the case of medical men—to obtain the representation and power on the General Nursing Council which their great work and authority render it both advisable and just that they should receive? To this difficult question, we propose to devote our attention next week. And, once more, we will ask our readers to follow our arguments carefully on this most important matter and to furnish us with their views on the various points which arise, so that we may have the great advantage of obtaining a powerful and most valuable consensus of professional opinion upon questions, the importance of which to Nurses, not alone in this country but throughout the world, can hardly be overestimated. For, just as the formation of the Royal British Nurses' Association has led to great advances being made in Hospitals all over the globe, and has brought about the formation of analogous bodies of Nurses in various countries, each one of which, in its turn, has been the centre for further improvements in the nursing of the sick, so any Nursing legislation which is effected in this country will most undoubtedly have a widespread and incalculable effect in fashioning similar State procedures in all other countries.

HEROISM.

READING the interesting anecdote recently recorded in this journal by a valued contributor, illustrative of presence of mind in a Nurse, we were reminded of a somewhat similar story told of a doctor. He was called to see a lady who was in the habit of dosing herself with homœopathic medicines. On the day in question she had, by accident, taken five globules instead of three. She immediately sent for her doctor (a homœopath), but as he was away from home and the case was urgent another doctor was summoned. He looked grave on hearing what had happened, and told his patient that if people *would* meddle with dangerous drugs they must take the consequences. "However, madam," he added, "if I can do nothing else, I can, at least, die with you," and so saying he emptied the remaining contents of the bottle into his mouth. And yet there are some who assert that the days of chivalry have departed!

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)