

allowed to take them. I know probationers are the cheapest form of nursing labour; but the return in teaching and experience should be adequate, and this is at present far from being always the case. Cruel injustice is often done to those young women who enter such institutions without knowing how small is the value of the experience they are gaining. Nurses should certainly specialise, but special training should not be allowed to take the place of general training, but to supplement it. Part of the work of the General Nursing Council will undoubtedly be to fairly apportion the time that may safely be given to special work during a nurse's training.

The attacks of Dr. Coutts on the Societies to which I have the honour to belong leave me cold. I know for a fact that, certainly outside the London four-mile radius, the dissatisfaction with the present chaotic state of nursing affairs is far deeper and far greater than appears from the number of nurses who have joined the State Registration Society. That the great majority of nurses are content to wring their hands and declare that things are drifting from bad to worse instead of setting their shoulders to the wheel to try and get the cart out of the mud is only what one expects. When we are high and dry they will be pleased, and congratulate themselves on their improved condition—that also one expects. Dr. Coutts doubtless remembers that it was a small and much maligned band of men who foregathered in the middle of last century to set the medical house in order, and that they also ran up against a good many vested interests. But fairness, justice, and tact won the day, and that is a good omen for us.

It is the keen desire of the nursing members of the Society for the State Registration of Nurses that no harm, no wrong, and no injustice shall be done to any of our sisters, but that in the future our profession shall stand on a firm basis we are determined. The Nurses' Registration Bill is drafted in the best interests of the medical and nursing professions, and, above all, of the general public—the great body who are, after all is said and done, the people most concerned.

I am, etc.,

M. MOLLETT, Matron,
Vice-President of the Matrons' Council;
Vice-President of the Society for the
State Registration of Nurses.
Royal South Hants and Southampton Hospital.

"A GRAVE ERROR OF JUDGMENT."

We are pleased to note the following criticism in last week's *British Medical Journal*, under the heading of "Nurses and Registration":—

"Some rather remarkable facts were revealed at an inquest at Southsea on December 13th, on the body of an infant, aged five weeks, which had admittedly died from morphine poisoning. The morphine was given by a woman who described herself as a trained nurse, and who had been sent to the house from a nursing home. Why she had been placed in charge of the child is nowhere specially stated in the account of the inquest given

by the *Portsmouth Evening News*, but the child's grandfather, a retired surgeon in the Navy, who was called when the poisoning was first discovered, described the child as healthy, and as having been "all right" on the night before its death. In any case, the nurse, who admitted that she had no orders to give morphine, did not profess that she gave it for any reason except that the child was crying and disturbing its mother. To soothe it she gave it half of a $\frac{1}{2}$ -grain tablet of morphine in a teaspoonful of milk. She thought it a small dose for a child, because she herself had, on two occasions, taken two doses of 1 grain, once $1\frac{1}{2}$ grains, and once 2 grains. She had been a nurse for five years. The Coroner, in summing up, said that her action was reprehensible, and reflected on her as a nurse, but an error of judgment was different from an act of gross and culpable negligence such as would render the offender liable to be charged with manslaughter. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the facts stated, adding a rider to the effect that the nurse should be severely censured. This case may be used as an argument in favour of the establishment of an official register of nurses. Here we have a woman sent from a nursing home who considers herself entitled to drug a child without any orders, to give it morphine for no other reason than because it is keeping people awake, and who is not aware that in the case of a child of five weeks old $\frac{1}{2}$ grain of morphine is almost necessarily a fatal dose. Did a nursing register exist, the point would arise as to whether a person who had given evidence of such unusual beliefs should be allowed to retain the title of "trained nurse," and it would probably be possible to find out why she came to consider herself a trained nurse at all, and if she proved to hold a certificate from a recognised school, to inquire as to what defects in its training system enabled one of its pupils to leave its portals with such remarkable notions."

WELCOME HELP.

We acknowledge with many thanks the following donations towards the expenses of the Nurses' Registration Bill:—

	£	s.	d.
Miss M. A. Sanderson	1	1	0
Miss M. Burr	10	0	
Miss R. Metherell, R.N.S.	2	6	

HELP FOR THE Q.V.J.I., CARDIFF.

It is anticipated that nearly £200 will be handed over to the Committee of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Nurses' Institute as a result of the dance held last week in the City Hall, Cardiff, which was arranged by the Lady Mayoress. The Committee, and the Secretary, Mr. E. C. Willmott, are greatly to be congratulated on this result of their efforts.

THE ASSING BELL.

We regret to record the death of Miss Elizabeth Catherine Jones, formerly a nurse at the Whitchurch Mental Hospital. In August last Miss Jones sustained injuries in a bicycling accident, to which she recently succumbed.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)