

### NURSING ECHOES.

We continue to receive many letters expressing hesitation to register under the General Nursing Council. We sympathise with our correspondents, but advise without hesitation that they should avail themselves of the benefits of the Act. Conscientious interest in their profession in the future by Registered Nurses is the only means of securing self-government, and the present monopoly of executive power by the lay and medical members of the Council, and the bureaucratic management of the office, should be resisted by a self-respecting Nursing community. Register now, and do your duty to your cloth in the future.

In the *Nineteenth Century and After* Miss E. S. Haldane discusses "Nursing as a Profession," and says:—

"What forms a profession as distinguished from an occupation it is difficult to say. In any case it involves two things, one of which is the skill and knowledge which is acquired not alone by mere mechanical skill, but also by the exercise of the intellectual faculties. The other is an equal requisite for any pursuit that is more than ancillary, and that is self-government. The nurse has only within the last year or two had any claim to the last qualification, and indeed she is only now beginning to realise the effect of the Nurses' Registration Act of 1919. At last she is coming to claim her recognition as an important factor in the great work of maintaining the health of the nation, and as a partner in this work—if a junior one—with the medical man, rather than simply an instrument in his hands."

After touching on the development of nursing from ancient times down to the work of Florence Nightingale in the Crimea, Miss Haldane emphasises the fact (so often insisted on in this Journal) that "enormously important as this work was, her main desire was to raise the status of nursing from being a menial occupation to that of a trained calling, and this was the work to which she devoted herself on her return to the East."

Miss Haldane points out that there were "years of struggle over the question of State Registration, until, in 1919, a Nurses' Registration Act became law."

It is to be regretted that an article of this nature should make no mention of the Royal British Nurses' Association, the organisation through which the registration movement was first inaugurated, or of the Society for the

State Registration of Trained Nurses, which drafted and introduced the first Bill into the House of Commons in 1904, to procure this most necessary legislation, and upon which the present Act is based. Neither is mention made of the Central Committee's united effort. Such omissions leave "the record of the organisation of the new profession that has been growing up amongst us year by year almost without our realising it," as Miss Haldane writes, historically incomplete, especially as the cost—£30,000—of procuring this reform was entirely contributed by members of these groups.

Miss Haldane recognises the immense importance of the Public Health work done by the trained nurse, as well as of that in other branches: "she is constantly placed in a position of great responsibility, and is looked to to do much besides the mere assisting of the doctor in illness, and the better equipped she is for this work the better for her patients and neighbours." The nursing profession, in short, "is proving itself to be a potent factor in our civilisation, and one that we must seriously take into account."

Here, says *Truth*, is another little matter which throws a curious light on the workings of bureaucracy. A 100 per cent. disabled member of Queen Alexandra's Nursing Service applied to the Awards Branch of the Pensions Ministry for an assessment for two years, on the ground of the danger to her health of the usual half-yearly medical examination. The appeal was allowed. When, however, she applied to the Treatment Branch of the Ministry for a refund of the amount of her medical bills she was informed that owing to a new regulation the refund is conditional on an examination every two months by a Pensions Ministry official. Could anything be more absurd or unjust? Clearly if a half-yearly examination is harmful, an examination every two months must be much more so. Mr. Macpherson should see that the branches of his departments do not stultify each other in this fashion.

The Cathedral Nursing Society for the Sick Poor of Newcastle, 48, Osborne Road, is £1,100 in debt, and the nurses are arranging a garden sale of work in the hope of removing this burden.

Unless this debt can be reduced it is feared that the staff will have to be cut down, and as this is the only institution of the kind in

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