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EDITORIAL.

NURSING IN 1922.

During 1922, as in 1921, the chief interest in nursing circles has been centred in the General Nursing Councils for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

It has, we are aware, been a great disappointment to many Registered Nurses that more has not been achieved by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales before going out of office on December 23rd. Undoubtedly, under more auspicious conditions, more might have been accomplished, but let us first of all consider what has actually been done.

The great wave of progress which at the end of 1919 landed the Nurses' Registration Acts on the Statute Book of these Realms could not be expected to sweep everything before it. It is only in accordance with precedence that it should recede before another great forward movement results in the final emancipation of the Nursing Profession.

The members of the profession have for many years been in a condition of economic servitude. Here and there a brave spirit has had the courage to rebel against these conditions, to demand that, like other professions, it shall be self-governing and self-supporting. The work which resulted in the passing of the Registration Acts was the work of the few, not of the many; they secured for nurses almost a two-thirds majority on their Governing Body, a great triumph, which those who have worked through the thirty years before the Act was passed will recognise. Unfortunately, however, many of those appointed on to the Council had only come into the movement when the battle was won, and had for so long opposed the principle underlying the organisation of Trained Nursing by the State, that they continued to think along the same groove, and, so far as we are aware, took no steps to fit themselves for public service.

The result has been that they have shuffled off their responsibilities on to the minority of men on the Council and thus undermined the

principle of self-government—power which was only too eagerly grasped by men who, with two exceptions, have all been, or are, medical officials, and therefore more or less in the habit of autocratic control of their subordinates, the nurses—an element from which independence for the Nursing Profession will never be conceded.

The mistakes of the new converts were partly mistakes of ignorance, partly of the spirit of intolerance, which they had so long exercised in connection with State Registration, and all that it included, partly of those who owed allegiance to an outside organisation under the domination of the employers of nurses.

At the beginning of the present year we were in the trough of the receding wave. The majority of the Council were in a state of suspended animation, and it was not until February 3rd it once again began to function, coming back with a promise of the support of the late Minister of Health.

Having treated their colleagues with such contempt, it was an unmerited indignity that they should have been permitted to trifle with the security of the Nursing Profession. Unfortunately their irresponsible and reprehensible conduct was condoned, if not encouraged, by the late Minister of Health, and they returned to office to trample on the convictions and aspirations of the informed minority.

From the day that the reactionaries were reinstated in power by Sir Alfred Mond the provisions of the Nurses' Act have been flouted and ignored.

Just Rules have been rescinded, preferential treatment has been given to groups of nurses, huge expenditure has been incurred without, apparently, any tangible results for the benefit of the Profession.

The Register due in July, 1922, has not been published; an attempt has been made by the Education Committee to evade the right of the nurses under the Act to a "prescribed scheme" of training, the adoption of the protected uniform and badge have been constantly

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)