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EDITORIAL.

DIGNITY IS CENTRED IN DUTY.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, from its foundation as the *Nursing Record* in 1888, has kept before its readers the necessity for the organisation of the Nursing Profession under State authority, and has worked strenuously to obtain it, and to gain for nurses the privileges of a prescribed and standardised training, a one-portal examination, followed by registration, and the protected title of Registered Nurse. We have had the happiness of seeing the Nursing Acts placed upon the Statute Book, and all these privileges granted by Parliament under the Royal Sign Manual.

But we must warn nurses that it is necessary they should firmly insist upon the provision of the Nurses' Registration Act (Section 3 (2) (a)), under which they are granted the hardly contested, and hardly won, right to a "prescribed training," otherwise they may be deprived of it by the action of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales. The extraordinary aspect of the situation is that it is proposed that the schemes of prescribed training for male, mental, fever, and sick children's nurses shall be submitted to the Minister of Health for his approval, and thus have the force of a Statutory Rule in conformity with the Act.

The reason for denying the same privilege to general nurses is plainly that the strong opposition to the organisation of nurses, and to "State Interference" with the education the hospital and poor law authorities choose to give, or not to give, to their pupils has not wholly died down, and the General Nursing Council has not sufficient conscience or courage to stick to its guns, but, in a most invertebrate manner, proposes that the Syllabus of Education and Training which it has framed for the General Part of the Register shall be merely advisory.

The matter, of course, does not end with a ukase of the General Nursing Council. Parliament has given the Nursing Profession the right to a prescribed training, and will, no doubt, see that its decisions are not flouted.

The special pleading of Sir Wilmot Herringham, the Chairman of the Council, at its last meeting, when he compared the position of the General Nursing Council to that of the General Medical Council, and said that the Council, by trying to make things compulsory, was putting itself under the heel of the Ministry of Health, and losing, not gaining, in position, was most misleading.

In the first place, the General Medical Council is not the examining body for the medical profession, a position conferred upon the General Nursing Councils under the Nurses' Registration Acts; and, in the second place, it is not the dignity of the Council which is of primary importance, but that it should do justice to nurses, and secure for them the "prescribed training" for which the Act makes provision. The only way that the General Nursing Council can maintain its dignity is by doing its duty.

In the present case the Council is placing itself in a most undignified position. It has no right and no power to publish and issue a Curriculum of Training without the approval of the Minister of Health and of Parliament. It is merely trying to evade the Act, and nurses are not going to submit to it.

We should quite sympathise with the General Nursing Council if it were an entirely professional body, which it is not, if it promulgated its expert decisions and then had them overridden in the Ministry of Health, but considering the manner in which the opinions of nurses are flouted on their own Governing Body by the ignorant laity, dictatorial doctors, and the College group, it is well that Parliament has retained the ultimate control.

Sir Wilmot Herringham talks of the General Nursing Council being the Governing Body of the Nursing Profession by consent. We presume he means by consent of the laity. What he must realise is that it must govern by consent of the nurses. It is easy to browbeat timorous nurses and flout their opinion, but medical autocrats must learn that it is not feasible to browbeat Parliament.

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