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EDITORIAL.

OUR NEW YEAR'S DUTY.

In expressing our good wishes to our readers for their prosperity and advancement, in the year upon which we are now entering, we desire, most ardently, that they should realise the duty of securing those rights which have been granted to them by Act of Parliament.

A PRESCRIBED STANDARD OF NURSING EDUCATION.

The right to which we especially refer is that to a prescribed standard of nursing education and training, the present General Nursing Council for England and Wales has so far not enforced a Compulsory Syllabus of Training, in Nursing Schools which have asked for recognition to prepare pupils for the State Examination.

The Council has now been in office for two years, and, dominated by its autocratic medical Chairman, has failed, so far, to exercise any determination in this respect.

If the General Nursing Council for England and Wales fails in its duty—and Miss M. Wiese who reminded it at the last Meeting that it had failed to protect the nurses in training, did not get a seconder to a Resolution under which the question could have been discussed—then the Registered Nurses must take the matter into their own hands, and demand that a Syllabus of Training shall be issued, to which hospital authorities shall be required to conform, so that probationers shall know what they have to learn, and upon what they will be examined. This is an aim which we hope the Registered Nurses will set before themselves to be accomplished in the ensuing year.

THE ELECTION OF NURSE REPRESENTATIVES.

The other point to which they should turn their attention is the Schedule for the Election of Direct Representatives of Registered Nurses to be members of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

It will be remembered that on March 14th, 1923, when Major Barnett moved in the House of Commons that an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, praying for the modification of the proposals of the General Nursing Council, the present Minister of Health undertook, if the motion were withdrawn, to ask the General Nursing Council to consider Major Barnett's Amendments, and submit to him such alterations as they were prepared to make within the next twelve months. The G.N.C. has therefore had ample time in which to arrive at a unanimous conclusion. Nevertheless, when it considered the question in July last on the Report of the Registration Committee, no less than four different motions in reference to the Scheme were on the Agenda, and two more were made in the Room, including one "that the whole of the eleven seats reserved for Registered Nurses be open to all Registered Nurses." That

is the just Scheme, already in force in Scotland, and we hope the Registered Nurses will convince Parliament that they will not be satisfied with a less democratic scheme of election.

NURSES NOT ENTITLED TO PRACTISE MEDICINE.

The sad case of the death of a 14-year-old boy, who died in the Kingston and District Hospital from diabetic coma, should be a warning, if warning be needed by registered nurses, not to undertake the treatment, or nursing, of the community, except under the direction of a medical practitioner. The more highly-trained the nurse, as a rule, the more she realises her limitations, and knows that her training does not qualify her to treat the sick, but to carry out punctiliously and skilfully the prescribed treatment.

In the case above referred to, evidence was given on December 20th, at an inquest at Kingston-on-Thames, that the deceased lad had been in hospital under treatment for diabetes, and had made excellent progress, but was taken home by his father on December 10th on the understanding that insulin treatment would be continued under a Wimbledon doctor.

The father told the Coroner (Dr. Taylor) that no doctor would undertake the case, and he therefore asked the district nurse to give the injections. Within a few days the boy became ill, and had to be taken back to the hospital, where he died.

The nurse concerned in the case (Nurse Woollaston) stated in evidence that she had been warned about the pernicious effects of an overdose of insulin, and that she objected to taking the case except under a doctor's supervision. The boy's father, however, said he could not get a doctor.

The Coroner said the nurse ought not to have taken the case, as insulin treatment needed to be very carefully given, under a doctor's supervision, whereupon the nurse replied that she could not see that she had done anything wrong.

The Coroner thereupon informed her that she was assuming that she was entitled to treat people with insulin, but that she had no right to undertake duties which should be carried out by a doctor.

It would be reasonable to suppose that a nurse would have accepted the rebuke of the Coroner when her error was pointed out to her, instead of which her attitude was that of self-justification.

We do not find the name of the nurse in the State Register of Nurses, and therefore there is no means of knowing what her training may be, but, whatever her training, we entirely endorse the Coroner's opinion that she had no right to assume the duties of a medical practitioner.

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