

following a precedent of the medical profession. But not only have we to reckon with different Registers, the nurses on the General Register tend more and more to become separated into groups each engaged and concerned with some particular branch of work which has grown up out of the qualifications they have acquired. All these very varied interests and activities complicate more and more efforts to organise the profession, although they add correspondingly to its importance and its value to the community. The National Council of Nurses of Great Britain has evolved a scheme whereby the interests and activities of all branches of nursing and shades of nursing thought shall be recognised. This has been achieved by the grouping together of the various societies and leagues who have representation upon the Council, and this representation is so adjusted that as far as possible minorities are safeguarded and the voice of the smaller specialist branches cannot be lost in that of the larger bodies. Also such grouping, in the light of professional self-knowledge and self-determination, gives encouragement to the smaller sections to progress and to bring to perfection the department of nursing in which they are called upon to be active.

I have referred to a tendency in organisations of nurses for a certain small group to dominate professional policy. This may very often be justified by laziness in individuals in connection with will and more especially thought. But such a system of things is wrong, and one very inimical to minorities when those have exercised what might be described as the bravery of thought, whether their conclusions may be right or wrong: relative to this feature in organisation I would say, in parentheses, that very often the folly of the present is the wisdom of the future.

In speaking as I did of self-determination I do not suggest for a moment that leadership can be dispensed with. The nurses must have their leaders. It is through organisation that the nurses will find their leaders and the leaders their opportunity. Leaders they should be possessing the spirit of the organisation they represent, leaders but not dictators. Here arises a thought which I can but refer to; but a reference is necessary because the matter is one of fundamental importance to the ethics of organisation. During the years of training the nurses should be concerned only with that first aspect of which I spoke (*i.e.*, ethics, education, etc.), any system of influencing those student nurses whether by coercion or suasion in one form or another, as to the organisation and policy they will support when they become Registered Nurses, is wrong. By such systems you penetrate and impinge upon young thought and send that down into the unconscious. By this damping down of thought you take away the consciousness of a great responsibility and obliterate professional conscience in relation thereto. By such methods that which should remain free is chained down in the subconscious and too often by the penetration of mere corpses of thought that belonged to bygone decades and cannot realise facts arising in evolution.

In conclusion, these are the points to which I would seek to direct discussion more particularly—in the first place there is the matter of attainment of professional self-government through organisation, national and international. Then there is the extent to which economic pressure may curtail freedom of opinion and action in efforts to organise the profession. Next there is the importance of the duty of organisation to educate the public to an understanding of the injustice of confiding the care of the sick poor or, indeed any sick people, to other than Registered Nurses, and I would press that every organisation of nurses, represented on the International Council of Nurses, put on its programme, as one of its purposes, the attainment of a form of organisation much to be desired—

legislation in every country for the compulsory Registration of Nurses. This was discussed freely at the last Congress, and so I only refer to it now.

I cannot close this paper without including in it a note of acknowledgment to the first inspirers of organisation in the profession. The International Council of Nurses was founded here in London on the initiative of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, and it is but fitting that a kind of motif linking up the past with the present should recur in the various meetings of the Congress (and in none more than the present). We almost invariably find that in any great world development what is to become general in the future is carried first in the personality of one individual, carried usually through the fires of strife and sacrifice. Others, in small numbers at first, may see the vision and recognise a leader, but progress is always painful and what I have called the bravery of thought is needed. Therefore, across the years, we hail those leaders of organisation—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Miss Margaret Breay, Miss Margaret Huxley, Miss Adelaide Nutting, Miss Lavinia Dock, Miss Agnes Snively and Sister Agnes Karl.

## THE DEAR ANIMALS.

The "Winter" number of *The Quarterly Bulletin of The Frontier Nursing Service* is a delightful issue. It may almost be called the animals' number. The cover picture was drawn by the well-known New York artist Alan Dunn, and presents a member of the service fully equipped, splashing on horseback through stream and snow on her errand of mercy. These Sisters love their mounts very dearly. Inside cover we find reproduced Gainsborough's "Study of an Old Horse."

To quote the first page:—

### THE WHITE HORSE.

From *The Life of Saint Columba (Columb-Kille)*. A.D. 521-597. By Adamnan (A.D. 679-704) Translated from the Latin by Wentworth Huyshe.

After this the Saint goes out of the granary, and, returning to the monastery, sits down half-way at the place where afterwards a cross, fixed in a millstone, and standing to this day, is to be seen at the roadside. And while the Saint, weary with age as I have said, rested there, sitting for a little while, behold the white horse, a faithful servant, runs up to him, the one which used to carry the milk pails to and fro between the byre and the monastery. He, coming up to the Saint, wonderful to tell, lays his head against his breast—inspired, as I believe, by God, by whose dispensation every animal has sense to perceive things according as its Creator Himself has ordained—knowing that his master was soon about to leave him, and that he would see him no more, began to whinny and to shed copious tears into the lap of the Saint as though he had been a man, and weeping and foaming at the mouth. And the attendant, seeing this, began to drive away the weeping mourner, but the Saint forbade him, saying: "Let him alone, let him alone, for he loves me. Let him pour out the tears of his bitter lamentation into this my bosom. Lo! now, thou, man as thou art, and possessing a rational soul, couldst in no wise know anything about my departure hence save what I myself have just now told thee: but to this brute beast, devoid of reason, the Creator Himself has clearly in some way revealed that his master is about to go away from him." And so saying, he blessed his servant the horse as it sadly turned to go away from him.

We shall quote in future issues an anonymous Prayer for Animals, a something of the tremendous debt we owe to them.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)