

## National Health Society.



ON Saturday, 16th inst., the annual meeting of the National Health Society was held, by kind permission of the Duke of Westminster, at Grosvenor House, when the medals, certificates, and prizes gained by the pupils who had successfully passed examinations in ambulance, hygiene, and cookery, were distributed by

H.R.H. Princess Christian.

Her Royal Highness, who was dressed in black crêpon, relieved by black lisse, was supported on the platform by the Duke of Westminster (in the chair); the Duchess of Westminster, who was attired in lilac silk of two shades; Lady Priestley, who wore black and heliotrope, and old lace; Miss Lankester, Miss Rose Squire, and other ladies and gentlemen, besides those who addressed the meeting.

The Duke, in a few opening remarks, spoke of the successful results of the lectures on hygiene given by Professor Corfield and Dr. Schofield. The Duchess of Albany had been one of the successful candidates in the subject of Hygiene, and he regretted that she had not been present to have received her certificate in person. Several ladies had kindly lent their drawing-rooms for lectures, and he mentioned the matter as a suggestion to others.

After these few introductory words, the medals and prizes, and some 300 certificates, were given to the candidates by Her Royal Highness. The recipients were pupils of the training classes, and ladies who had attended drawing-room courses of lectures, and also the lectures organised by the County Councils, some slight difference being made in the two kinds of certificates. Between the two classes of recipients there was no apparent difference, except that the ladies who had attended the drawing-room classes received their certificates from Her Royal Highness with the bobbing courtesy that custom ordains, while the ladies who had attended the County Council lectures received theirs with the more graceful but less deferential bow.

Three gentlemen appeared amongst the competitors, and one little girl was loudly applauded.

After the distribution, Dr. Schofield spoke of the appointments that were opening up to ladies in the public service, such as Sanitary Inspectorships and Factory Inspectorships, and referred to the recognition of the value of the study of hygiene, evinced by the fact that the Universities now for the first time had included hygiene as a subject for their examinations. With regard to the work of the National Health Society, the Society had a project for establishing branch societies in the provinces, and the promoters were anxious to invite the co-operation of all interested in sanitation to assist. The project was to send ladies—whom they would designate "Health Sisters"—into parishes, where their duty would be to advise the poor on questions of sanitation in their homes, and to report unhealthy conditions of dwellings to the local sanitary authority. One lady in Brighton had inquired from him if the National Health Society could send down to her such a "Health Sister" who could live in her house and instruct her on all the points necessary to the health of her home. This incident seemed to show there was an opening for such

teachers. An important feature of the project was that the "Health Sisters" should wear a uniform quite dissimilar from that of Nurses. And amongst the rules for their guidance it was laid down that in no circumstance should they attend a case of illness.

Archdeacon Sinclair, whose ten years' work in the diocese of Westminster had given him a knowledge of the needs of the poor, spoke of the desirability of adding to the army of Deaconesses, Sisters of Mercy, and benevolent ladies engaged in similar work, instructors who could teach the poor to understand the laws of health, and to whom the ladies already working in the parish might apply for advice and instruction in these matters. It was difficult to enforce sanitation—impossible to make people clean against their will. It was of more importance to spread sanitary instruction than to pass sanitary laws. He would hope that the recipients of the certificates would be actual or potential "Health Sisters." In his experience the poor people, surprising as it might seem, were grateful for religious tracts, and he believed that health tracts and other literature on the subject would be equally acceptable, and work good results.

The Duke of Westminster, in a few appropriate words, proposed a vote of thanks to her Royal Highness, which was duly seconded. No Nurse who had taken the certificate of the Society could go to the homes of the sick without beneficial effect, nor could the ladies and gentlemen who lectured on technical education fail to do good.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Duke and Duchess of Westminster, proposed by Sir Douglas Galton.

## Notes on Hospitals and General Nursing in Melbourne.

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

NURSING both in Hospital and in private work, as seen now and as seen ten or eleven years ago in Melbourne, is something to excite astonishment, it has advanced with such wonderful strides. And has now an ever increasing army of candidates (such as they are) ready to enter into the profession. Of these, not a few are ward maids and "generals," who have developed a very hearty dislike to the useful scrubbing-brush, and would prefer to handle the more delicate clinical thermometer. And, notwithstanding their ignorance and want of education, there have been Matrons of sufficiently unsound judgment to admit such on some of the Melbourne Nursing staffs. Let us hope the results will increase their discrimination in future. So many people too, we find, pick out from a family of girls, who must work to live, the most stupid one, unlikely to shine in anything else, and single her out as the very person suitable and good enough for a Nurse. Yes, for a profession that requires brightness, intelligence, and every good quality that makes woman lovable, such a dullard, perhaps, (and most likely unlovely as well in appearance), is passed on out of the family, where she is despised, to be a chronic nightmare to sick people. I have seen this repeatedly, and heard the parents say, "She has less brains than my other children"; (Oh, for the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)