

Our Foreign Letter.

[By our Sydney Correspondent.]

THE AUSTRALASIAN TRAINED NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

THE CONVERSAZIONE.



DEAR EDITOR
—The Conversazione given by Sir Matthew and Lady Harris (the Mayor and Mayoress of Sydney), was held on Friday evening,

July 20th, in the Town Hall. About 2,000 invitations were issued, and out of that number 1,500 were accepted. Unfortunately the night was extremely wet and cold, and hundreds were prevented from being present. Sir Frederick Darley (the Chief Justice) had promised to speak on behalf of the Association, but owing to the inclemency of the weather, he was unable to come. In his absence, Dr. Norton Manning (the President of the Association) explained the objects of the Association, and Sir Wm. Lyne (Premier of N. S. Wales) advocated the necessity for starting a Pension and Benevolent Fund for Nurses. I may here state that the idea in our minds when a Conversazione was suggested, was to bring before the Sydney Public the need of a Pension and Benevolent Fund for Nurses, one gentleman has already given £21 towards the Benevolent Fund, and it is hoped before long that more money will be forthcoming. Just now it is hard to get money owing to the people having had so many calls on their liberality lately. On the whole the Conversazione was a great success, and if it does not make the people subscribe towards the Pension and Benevolent Funds, at any rate it will make the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association, more widely known amongst the Sydney Public who employ nurses. So that in future the qualifications of the nurses employed will be inquired into before engaging them.

Later on I hope to be able to report to you that a Pension Fund for Nurses has been started. I enclose an account of the conversazione which appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* :—

Some time ago the sympathies of Sir Matthew Harris were enlisted on behalf of the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association, and seconded by the Lady Mayoress he decided to hold a conversazione in the Town Hall, and invite representative men to be present on the occasion, when also the members of the newly-formed association would be received. The function took place last night, and despite the very severe weather was a brilliant and interesting one. The Mayor had to apologise for the absence of a number of gentlemen for whom it would have been unsafe to venture out in wet weather, but there was all the same a very large number of guests, and the conversazione did not lack interest through paucity of attendance. An enclosure for the Vice-regal party, sheltered by expanding palm trees, was arranged in the centre of the hall, and

from the main entrance as far as the enclosure was an archway of foliage, which again was admirably and profusely arranged around the platform, the sides of which were lined with large reflecting mirrors. The decorations of the hall were tasteful. Sir Matthew and Lady Harris received the visitors at 8 o'clock. The Government House party consisted of Lady Mary Lygon and Lady Susan Gilmour, attended by Captain Wilfrid Smith, Private Secretary. The Nurses Association was well represented. Its president (Dr. Norton Manning) was amongst those present, and during the evening he was introduced to the company by the Mayor, and made a short speech.

Dr. Manning said that the association was not merely for the benefit of nurses; it had other objects. It aimed at the education of nurses and the establishment of a register by which those who were qualified could be distinguished from those who were unqualified. It furthermore sought to establish a benevolent fund, from which members who were incapacitated from work either by illness or accident could be helped. Seventy medical practitioners had enrolled themselves as medical members.

Dr. Manning dwelt upon the importance of the proper training of nurses as something that would be of great benefit to the whole community. A curriculum for this purpose had been drawn up, and it was hoped that all hospitals would accept it. The register already contained the names of 350 nurses, and represented all the Australasian colonies. In apologising for the absence of some of the members Dr. Manning said that a number were in South Africa—(cheers)—others were in the quarantine area attending to plague patients—(cheers)—and many others could not leave the institutions in which they were tending the sick.

The Premier (Sir William Lyne) was introduced by the Mayor and made a short speech. He said that when he looked at the brilliant assemblage and at all those who were present, he had a feeling that he would like to fall ill and get nursed. (Laughter) He was glad to hear Dr. Manning refer to the fact that eleven members of the Association had gone to South Africa. They were doing splendid work. Some nurses had gone there who were not as well trained as those left in this Colony, and that had given rise to complaint. There were many soldiers who were willing to go from this Colony, but if he had accepted all the applications he had received from the nurses for leave to go to the war, there would have been a nurse for every soldier who could possibly get wounded. The Association would do great and good work in this way. When on a future occasion—if unhappily the occasion arose—we required to send a large number from this Colony to tend the sick and wounded, we would be able to get the services of those who were as well trained as were the members of this splendid association. It was a happy coincidence at a juncture when federation was uppermost in the minds of the people, and the Queen had signed the Commonwealth Bill, that a federated association of nurses should be formed. (Applause.)

The Colonial Secretary (Mr. See) also made a few remarks.

Amongst the letters of apology for non-attendance were those from Sir Frederick Darley, Professor Wilson, and the Matron of the Broken Hill Hospital.

During the evening a capital programme of music was gone through.

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