

A Retrospect.

According to our custom in this last issue of the year we devote some space to a brief review of the chief events of nursing interest during the past year.

ORGANISATION.

First as to organisation. Both at home and abroad the impetus given to the organisation of nurses in professional societies is noticeable. While until the end of 1899 no society of the graduates of a nurse-training school existed in this country, we now have the St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses' League, the League of St. John's House Nurses, Guy's Hospital Nurses' League, the Royal South Hants Nurses' League, and, lastly, the Chelsea Nurses' League. The rapid formation of these societies proves that they meet a need which has hitherto been unfilled.

In our Colonies the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association and the Victorian Trained Nurses' Association have done excellent work in promoting efficient nursing education and organisation, and a basis of uniform and reciprocal action has been established between the two Associations in regard to the registration of members, their removal from the roll for breaches of discipline, the recognition of hospitals, and the withdrawal of recognition when the teaching is deemed insufficient and unsatisfactory. In the latter Colony a Conjoint Board of Medical Men and Nurses as examiners has been formed to conduct the examination of nurses prior to their Registration by the Association.

STATE REGISTRATION.

The question of the State Registration of Trained Nurses has been brought into prominence in this country by the formation of a Society, of which the sole object is "To obtain, by Act of Parliament, a Bill providing for the Legal Registration of Trained Nurses." It is satisfactory that already over 500 nurses have enrolled themselves as members of this Society. The question has been brought before members of the public and trained nurses at meetings which have been arranged by the Society.

The difficulty which will be encountered in obtaining legislation on the question will no doubt be considerable. It must always be remembered that women can bring no *direct* pressure to bear upon our legislators, and are therefore at a great disadvantage. Further, that the present Government, which is pre-eminently an aristocratic one, has shown itself hopelessly uninterested and un-informed on questions concerning the economic and other interests of working women, and it is undoubted that members of the Government take their cue on women's questions largely from women of position in Society.

Many of these live still in an almost feudal atmosphere, and regard the trained nurse as yet

another retainer in common with "my peasants" and "my people." To such persons the professional aspect of a nurse's work is incomprehensible. Yet it is noticeable and encouraging that educated women, whose work for the community is of recognised national importance, have grasped the significance of the movement for the State Registration and professional organisation of nurses, and have given it their support. Thus Miss Louisa Stevenson, of Edinburgh, is the President of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and amongst its Vice-Presidents are to be found the names of the Lady Henry Somerset, Lady M'Laren, Mrs. Garrett Favcett, LL.D., Mrs. Scharlieb, M.D., Mrs. Eva M'Laren, Miss Flora Stevenson, Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, Mrs. Homan, and others who are foremost in the furtherance of all movements for the good of women.

Another difficulty which the Society will undoubtedly have to face is that nurses themselves so little grasp the educational and economic interests involved in the Registration question. For this, amongst other reasons, the co-operation of members of the laity who are acquainted with public affairs and with the intricacies of educational questions is very valuable.

In two of the United States—New York and Illinois—Bills have been drafted, and will be brought before the Legislature in these States, the object of which is "to regulate the practice of professional nursing of the sick." No doubt other States will follow suit, and before long we may expect to hear of the professional enfranchisement of American nurses.

Readers of this Journal are aware that the two countries where State Registration is already in force are Cape Colony and New Zealand.

THE MIDWIVES' BILL.

Legislation which affects nurses, inasmuch as a certain proportion of trained nurses are qualified midwives, is the Midwives' Act of 1902. It is satisfactory that while the Act does not make it obligatory to place a midwife on the Central Midwives' Board, yet three have actually been appointed, and two out of the three have been active in working for the passage of the Bill. It is also very satisfactory to be able to record that at the eleventh hour the system of Annual Local Licensing, which would have placed midwives on a level with hawkers, was abandoned in favour of a system of notification. There is little doubt that the opinions expressed by this Journal, as well as by the Matrons' Council, influenced this decision.

THE NURSING SERVICES.

An act of far-reaching consequence during the present year has been the formation of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, with a Matron-in-Chief, Miss Sidney J. Browne, as

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