

The Progress of State Registration.

A meeting of those interested in the Registration of Nurses was held on April 6th, in 55, Melville Street, Edinburgh, by the invitation of Mrs. W. S. Haldane. It was attended by a considerable number of Matrons, medical men, and others. Miss E. S. Haldane occupied the chair, and briefly explained the object of the meeting, which was to have a full discussion of the proposals now before Parliament, and to consider what, if any, action should be taken in their regard. Lady Helen Munro Ferguson spoke strongly in favour of the Bill advocated by the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, as did Miss Louisa Stevenson. Dr. Joseph Bell supported the Bill likewise, but suggested some slight modification of it, more especially as regards the clause respecting examination by the Central Council. Dr. Haig Ferguson and Dr. Ker also took part in the discussion, as did Miss Lumsden and others. Finally, on the proposal of Miss Sandford, seconded by Dr. Elsie Inglis, a small committee was appointed, with power to add to its number, which was directed to take the steps which seemed best to advance the interests of the Bill and make its objects known amongst nurses in Scotland. The committee appointed consisted of Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, Miss Wade (Lady Superintendent Queen's Nurses), Miss Sandford (late Matron City Fever Hospital), Miss Burleigh (Matron Sick Children's Hospital), Miss Haldane, and Dr. Bell. The meeting appeared to be practically unanimously in favour of the principle of the Bill, and this augurs well for the advancement of the cause in Scotland.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, who is at present in Ireland, where she has been speaking on State Registration, addressed a meeting, held by kind permission of the Fellows, at the Royal College of Physicians, in Dublin, on the subject on Friday. We hope to refer to this again in our next issue.

The *British Medical Journal*, in its last issue, published the reply of the Society for the State Registration of Nurses to the Anti-Registration Manifesto. The *Lancet* also had an Annotation on the same subject, and points out that the Memorandum in support of Registration is signed by representatives of Nursing Leagues. It is noteworthy that not one Nurses' Association, as such, is supporting the opposition.

We desire to draw the attention of our readers to two excellent leading articles on the Nursing Question which appeared in the *Medical Times* on March 26th and April 9th, expressing liberal-minded views of the Registration movement.

THE DEPUTATION TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE.

It will be remembered that a Deputation from the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses was recently received by the Public Health Committee of the House of Commons, when the reasons for Registration were advanced from various standpoints. We print below the Memorandum presented by Miss Isla Stewart on behalf of the Society, and in a future issue we hope to publish that of Lady Helen Munro Ferguson dealing with the question from the point of view of a member of the public:—

MEMORANDUM.

1. It will be admitted that the nursing of the sick is a matter which closely affects every class of the community, and that it is, therefore, of extreme importance to the public that those who undertake the responsible duties of sick-nursing should be not only thoroughly trustworthy, but also skilled in their technical duties; it follows that it is the duty of the State to provide public safeguards in this matter.

2. The Census of 1901 showed that there were approximately 80,000 persons engaged in nursing the sick in the United Kingdom. Yet there is no organised method, and no minimum standard, of nursing education. There is no uniform test of efficiency, but hundreds of hospitals grant certificates. There is no controlling authority either over nursing education or over trained nurses. Moreover, it is a well-known fact that there are large numbers of women who have either never been trained at all, or who have been dismissed from hospitals after a short period of training as unsuitable or untrustworthy, who now term themselves trained nurses and obtain work in that capacity.

3. Every hospital is a self-constituted training-school, which decides, according to its own ideas and convenience, a term and standard of training, and confers its own certificate. This training may be good, bad, or indifferent. Such a system is often unfair to the pupil who binds herself to the service of an institution in the belief that she will receive instruction which will qualify her as a thoroughly-trained nurse. It is also unfair to medical men and the public, because they have no criterion as to the knowledge and capacity of the nurses they employ.

For the last sixteen years efforts have been made by medical men and nurses to organise this chaotic system of nursing education; and this Session two Bills have been introduced into Parliament with the object of regulating the qualifications of nurses and providing for their legal Registration.

4. In brief, it is suggested that Parliament should pass an Act forming

A GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL—
a body empowered to deal with all educational

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