

Prize Giving at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

The ceremony of presenting the prizes at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, on Thursday, the 21st inst., to those who had passed highest in the examination in connection with the courses of lectures held during the winter was preceded by a garden party, held in the grounds of the Nurses' Home, which was looking its best in its spring attire. The guests, who were numerous, were hospitably entertained by Miss Gill, the Lady Superintendent, with the help of the Assistant Lady Superintendent and Sisters. The party subsequently adjourned to the large theatre, which was specially arranged for the purpose, and the central portion of which was reserved for the use of the various grades of nurses in their respective uniforms, thus giving a gay aspect to the scene. In the front row were the prizewinners, who were presented in turn by Miss Gill to Mr. Haldane, the Secretary of State for War, who had honoured the school by consenting to award the prizes.

Amongst those present were the Right Honourable Lord Provost Gibson (who presided) and Mrs. Gibson, Lord Salvesen, Professor Rankine, Miss E. S. Haldane, Mr. W. B. Blaikie, Mr. J. B. Sutherland, S.S.C.; Mr. Ireland, Mrs. Kerr, Dr. Berry, Sir Halliday Croom, Professor Chiene, Professor Greenfield, Professor Wyllie, Dr. Bramwell, Dr. Barbour, Dr. Macgillivray, Dr. Haig Ferguson, Dr. Shannan, Mr. Cotterill, Mr. Mill, Dr. Playfair, Dr. M'Kenzie Johnson, Dr. Malcolm Farquharson, Mr. Alexis Thomson, Mr. Dowden, Mr. Stuart, Colonel Warburton, the superintendent; and Mr. Caw, the treasurer.

The Lord Provost, said they were honoured by the presence of the Secretary of State for War, and in extending to Mr. Haldane a very hearty welcome, said that the nursing for hospitals would form no inconsiderable part of the great scheme in which Mr. Haldane was engaged, and probably that was one reason why he had consented to come there that evening.

MR. HALDANE'S ADDRESS.

Mr. Haldane subsequently spoke as follows: There is in this assembly which has met here to-day that which interests me very deeply, more especially when I consider the training and work of those who are present. An Infirmary such as this great institution is not possible except on the basis of a very high kind of organisation, and a kind of organisation which can only be real when it is based

on high science. To my mind, organisation based on science is one of the most essential requisites of this country, a requisite in which this country is too often deficient; and any institution which presents an example of it is of value to the State far beyond its own particular department. You members of the nursing profession belong to a profession which is new, and which has endless possibilities before it. I call it new because there is almost nothing between the old generation of nurses and the present generation, excepting the name. The training and outlook are absolutely different. In old days, people looked for a cure to the physician and surgeon, and to them alone. The nurses, no doubt, were there, but they came in no one knew exactly where. Today the work of the physician and surgeon is divided. The physician and surgeon undertake only their part of that work for the health of the patient, and his restoration to health has been very largely left to the nurses. Their work is based on scientific knowledge—it is a profession based on science, and this is what makes an occasion like the present so interesting a one. Technical skill is needed; there are those who have inborn gifts for nursing, no doubt, but without that knowledge these avail very little. Without it no one can take her place as a really first-rate and efficient nurse.

And the sphere of nurses is rapidly widening. More and more are nurses being called to intervene in the affairs of the State and of public life. They are wanted for the working out of the business of local government, for the care not merely of the sick, but of those who come very close to the sick—the poor, the poor who suffer, the poor who must be watched and studied, that their situation and surroundings may be understood. They are wanted in great hospitals like this; they are wanted in private life, and they are wanted in country districts. The demand for their services is now so great that the supply is hardly adequate. And I venture to predict that as the years go on the demand will become larger and larger, as people realise what good nursing means to the physician and surgeon, and what it is that must be left to the nurses alone to carry out effectively.

These last two years I have been very busy trying to fashion out a comprehensive organisation for the country in regard to national defence. And this just means organisation for war and organisation in peace, which is based on preparation for war and nothing else. In doing this, I have had to survey the whole field, and in the process of building up a point

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)