

REGISTRATION DAY.

LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS WOMEN.

In December, 1929, ten years after the passing of the Nurses Registration Acts, the Council of the British College of Nurses decided to commemorate this great professional event annually by a special social function at which a Registration Cake would be cut, the increasing number of tapers on which would be lighted by present and past Councillors—and so popular has the ceremony proved that it is probable that in future the invitations will have to be greatly increased and the Lecture Halls used to accommodate the guests who desire to be present.

Each year we have stressed a special feature to keep in touch or memory with those dear and beloved friends who spent themselves for us, and by their generous support helped to attain legal status for our profession. Last year we dedicated the fine piece of plate, the Silver Platter on which to place the Cake—which is inscribed in memory of the late Sir Richard Barnett—our champion for ten years in the House of Commons—and this year the Council decided to take for its text: "Let us now praise famous (wo)men."

The Ceremony took place on Saturday, December the 19th, at 4.30 p.m., at the termination of the Council Meeting, and was held in the Secretary's beautiful office which had been appropriately decorated with lovely flowers, holly, cards and crackers by Miss. A. S. Bryson. In the centre of the room a splendid frosted cake inscribed: "British College of Nurses" was placed with a replica of the Seal of the College in marzipan, and below in crimson letters: "Registration of Nurses, 1919-1931." On a Table of Memories the signed photograph of Miss Nightingale in its purple miniature case, the life-like photograph of Isla Stewart, in her "Bart's" uniform, and a photograph of Mina Mollett were suffused with light, Christmas roses and jonquils adding their delicate charm to their environment.

The Meeting was informal. The President in the Chair, to right Miss Margaret Breay, to left Miss M. S. Cochrane, the Vice-Presidents. Mrs. Fenwick referred to the text of the Ceremony and said many famous people had in the past forty years taken part in the elevation of Nursing. It had been suggested that the names of all those who signed the great Petition to the Privy Council in support of the first Royal Charter for Nurses, for the Royal British Nurses Association, in 1892, founded to obtain State Registration of Nurses, should be read—but as it contained hundreds of names, as could be seen from the document in her hand—the President read the names of the Members of the Association who were named in the Incorporation Clause of the Draft Charter, headed by that of Her Royal Highness, Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein (Princess of Great Britain and Ireland), the list consisting of 28 eminent Physicians, Surgeons and Nurses—of these 28 only five were now alive; Sir James Crichton-Browne, Dr. Bedford Fenwick, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Miss Margaret Breay and Miss Gertrude A. Rogers. Amongst those who signed the Petition, we had with us in the room, Miss Breay, Miss Dowse, Miss Villiers and Miss Elma Smith. Others invited were unable to be present. The names of these veterans were received with applause.

DEDICATION TO MISS FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

The President then called upon Miss A. M. Bushby to read an Appreciation dedicated to Miss Florence Nightingale by an unknown author.

Miss Bushby said: "The following dedication is inscribed by the author of 'A Woman's Example and a Nation's Work. A Tribute to Florence Nightingale' in April, 1864." She then read the following Dedication in a very impressive manner.

DEDICATION.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

Your name, throughout the world, is synonymous with mercy, faith, and love. Where man has hesitated, you have resolved; when his courage has quailed, yours has surmounted every difficulty; where pestilence and death have stalked around, visibly and invisibly, you have chosen your abode. Your hands have soothed the tortures of thousands, and your whispers calmed the groans of the suffering into prayer and blessing. To you—the Guardian Angel of the Sick, the boast of England and the pride of our common humanity—I dedicate these pages!

All that is herein chronicled, you have a right to claim as the result of your own work. The seed sown by your hands in the Field of Aeldama has sprung up a goodly tree, whose branches may soon cover the whole earth; and when, in God's own time, the nations shall learn war no more, humanity will look back to your life of faith, mercy, and love, as the bright dawn-star of a better time, the harbinger of peace and good will to come.

Would that I had the power to write as such deeds should be written! Yet where the need? The story of your labours stands for ever sculptured in the enduring adamant of fact, and God the Omnipresent and Omniscient can alone decide the value of such a life as yours.

The audience expressed their appreciation and endorsed the praise of the great Founder of Modern Nursing.

MISS ISLA STEWART.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said: "At a Meeting of the Matrons' Council held at 431, Oxford Street, on Friday, April 2nd, 1910, Miss M. Mollett delivered the following Valedictory Address on the death of the late President, Miss Isla Stewart, who had held this honourable office since the foundation of the Council in 1894." Mrs. Fenwick then read Miss Mollett's Address:

VALEDICTORY.

Before the Council commences its work I have been asked to voice the respect, the last respect we can pay to our President, and to say good-bye. For we meet to-day under the shadow of a great sorrow. We have lost the bravest and most loyal leader we shall ever know.

Others may mourn with us the death of a great Matron, of a wise woman, of one who was a power for good in the profession, but we have also to bear the loss of a very dear comrade, who understood and shared our troubles and our difficulties, and who never failed friend or foe; of one who was the soul of honour and of good fellowship, and who led us most valiantly from the first founding of our Council. For, like the brave standard bearer she ever was she bore the standard of right and high principle unfalteringly throughout her career; she carried out to the letter the old instructions: "Ye shall not fall back, nor fly, nor suffer it to be wrested from you" and, at the end, might well say:—

I did not fail, nor faint, nor fly,
I carried the banner all the day;
Wrap it round me when I die.

If peace has its heroes as well as war, assuredly Isla Stewart was one, and had deserved to bear the motto, "Ich dien," for she served her God, her profession, and

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)