

## The Hospital World.

### GLASGOW ROYAL INFIRMARY.

THE Annual Meeting of the subscribers to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary was this year of especial interest, inasmuch as the names of two ladies were proposed to fill the two vacancies in the Directorate caused by the retirement in rotation of Mr. J. P. Maclay, and Mr. Samuel Marks. The meeting was held in the Merchants' Hall, the Hon. the Lord Provost, Sir David Richmond, presiding.

The Chairman in moving the adoption of the report, drew attention to the satisfactory condition of the management evidenced in it. He also announced that the funds now in the hands of the Committee for the Jubilee Reconstruction Building now amounted to between £81,000, and £82,000. The re-election of the majority of the present managers was then proposed from the Chair, and seconded and adopted, but the interest of the meeting was undoubtedly centred in the election of the new managers. The names of two gentlemen were suggested to fill the vacancies, and then Colonel Denny, M.P., in a convincing speech, urged upon the meeting the benefit which would accrue to the institution if the vacancies were filled by ladies. He said:—

"It had been known to the contributors for some time that it had occurred to a number of them that a very slight change might be introduced into the management by electing two ladies. He could hardly believe that this would be opposed as a matter of high policy. Any man who had watched the signs of the times would observe, and with satisfaction, that the influence of ladies was becoming much more extensively evident in all lines of business, but more especially in the great business of the distribution and management of charity and those institutions which spring from it. As to the capacity of ladies to take their share in this department of the business of life, there could not be the slightest doubt. He knew the entrance of women into many spheres of life was keenly criticised by the other sex, and there might be reason in arguing that in taking their place—in many cases in active competition with the male sex—they were placing upon woman a burden which she was not fitted to bear, and should not be called upon to undertake. But in this particular case of assisting in the control over charitable institutions, they were placing no burden upon woman which she was unfitted for, but rather, he should say, asking for her co-operation in a field for which she was peculiarly suited. The Royal Infirmary, in common with every other institution of the kind, had the great majority of its staff drawn from what the Irishman called "the female persuasion."

The experience of ages had shown that, as nurses, men could not compete in the slightest degree with women. The management of these nurses was invariably handed over to matrons, and it appeared to him it would be stopping short of the length they were entitled to go in argument if they asserted that in the control of matrons and nurses women should find no place. There was no unreasonable demand made by ladies for a monopoly of the management. They only desired to have a very small minority on the Governing Council—only a representation. It could not be argued that ladies, such as Mrs. Napier and Mrs. Mather, whom he had the honour of proposing, would be of no value. There were innumerable small things in the management of an infirmary which men were unsuited and unable to criticise. All the managers of this infirmary were busy, active men. The two ladies he had named had leisure, will, and capacity to assist. It was only recently that ladies had been admitted to a share in the parochial and educational government of the country, and what they had done there was known to every one. No one would venture to deny that two better women they could not have fixed upon. Was there anything in the constitution of the infirmary that debarred their election? He was not a very good classical scholar, and he would not undertake a sworn translation of these Latin words which entered into the constitution, but he pointed out that a constitution drawn up under one set of circumstances, with a doubtful meaning attached to its clauses, should not be held to obtain under an entirely different set of circumstances. Besides, constitutions were of very little good without subscriptions. A constitution without funds would benefit the sick and wounded of our community to an exceedingly limited extent, and those who subscribe the money surely had the power of choosing the management. It was, he believed, advisable that these two ladies, practical and well versed in all workings of charity with ample leisure to bestow upon the work, should have a chance of ameliorating still further the lot of those whose ill-fate it was to have to take advantage of the blessings of the Royal Infirmary of Glasgow."

Colonel Denny was ably seconded by Mr. Ingram, who said that the departure now proposed should have been made many years ago. The country had been the loser in not having taken advantage of the wit and wisdom of the women of the nation in work of this kind. The ladies nominated could in many matters promote the best interests of the infirmary.

Mr. Faithfull Begg, M.P., said that he did not like to give an entirely silent vote on this occasion. He entirely approved of Colonel Denny's proposal. He could not imagine any managerial

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)