

which is empowered to enforce the reasonable control and discipline of trained nurses. She deprecated the views of those medical men who feared that legal status for nurses would create an inferior order of medical practitioners, and said that her personal experience of the old and new systems of nursing had convinced her that loyalty and obedience to medical directions—so unsparingly evinced by the modern well-disciplined nurse—were eminently preferable to the lip-service of the past, and illustrated her meaning by a story of her probationer days. In his rounds an eminent physician gave directions for poultices to be applied every two hours, to which an obsequious old Sister smilingly acquiesced: "Yes, sir; yes, sir." Upon his departure, directions were given by the Sister that the poultices should only be applied, as convenient, every four or six hours. At the next visit of the physician he was cheerfully informed that his treatment had been carefully carried out, and when she (the bewildered probationer) blurted out the truth, the Sister, with a blazing face, shouted "Shut yer mouth!"

Mrs. Fenwick believed that organization of nurses would relieve medical practitioners—who at present had no means of ascertaining whether a nurse were efficiently trained or not—of an immense amount of anxiety. To the public the speaker considered some guarantee of efficiency was of supreme importance. At present the private nursing world was more largely exploited by untrained and unsuitable persons than any other branch of nursing work, and through irresponsible nursing institutions the public pay the fees commanded by trained and experienced nurses for the services of women who are neither one nor the other. When it is realised that between the visits of the medical attendant the nurse is left in charge of the patient, and that the comfort and even the life of a patient often depends upon her care and devotion, it will be seen that the stake which the public has in the question of efficient nurses cannot be exaggerated.

Mrs. Fenwick stated that in her opinion, and in that of many of the leading Matrons and medical men, Registration by Act of Parliament was the only means by which a general standard of education and a definite system of professional control could be enforced.

The speaker then briefly reviewed the progress of State Registration in the Colonies and America, and stated that in Cape Colony and New Zealand nurses are now registered by Act of Parliament; that in New South Wales and Victoria powerful associations of nurses and medical practitioners are well organised, a definite scheme of education laid down, and conformed to by all nurse-training schools; a Conjoint Board of Examiners appointed, representa-

tive of nursing and medical interests; and that a voluntary Register of Trained Nurses is issued, all preparatory to a demand for State Registration by the Federal Parliament of the Commonwealth. Canada was moving, and, in the United States of America, State Societies of Nurses were combining, with the sole object of enforcing a uniform standard of nursing education and legal status by State Registration. Mrs. Fenwick considered the outlook had never been so hopeful in this country, as there was undoubtedly a great awakening on the part of the medical profession, of Matrons, nurses, and thoughtful members of the laity on this important national question of the organisation of the nursing profession. Mrs. Fenwick suggested that the Legislature should pass an Act forming

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representative of nursing, medical and lay interests, that this body should be empowered to deal with all educational matters affecting nurses, to define the precise curriculum through which every nurse must pass before she can be certificated as a trained nurse. It would be the duty of this Council to appoint examiners, to hold examinations, and to grant to candidates who passed the examinations a State Diploma of Nursing. The Council would publish each year a complete list of registered nurses, and would have power after strict investigation to remove from the Register the name of any nurse who proved herself unworthy of trust and professional confidence.

Mrs. Fenwick's address was most warmly received, and Dr. Prosser White, in proposing a vote of thanks, spoke in cordial appreciation of nurses and their work. "We can't do without you—the public can't do without you," he remarked. He expressed himself much in sympathy with the professional ideal placed before them by Mrs. Fenwick, and was keenly alive to the present disorganised condition of nursing. He advised the nurses to consider well their own affairs.

In seconding the vote of thanks in a most kind manner, Dr. Graham said that he was strongly in favour of State Registration of Nurses. He considered the time had come when it should be enforced, in justice to all concerned.

In thanking the speakers and those present for their attention and interest, Mrs. Fenwick remarked that she greatly appreciated the privilege of bringing the question of State Registration before so sympathetic an audience.

At the close of the meeting—which was held in the nurses' beautiful sitting-room—much informal conversation took place—always a useful way of ventilating so important a question. A most sumptuous real North-country tea was thoroughly enjoyed, many promises of help towards the attainment of organisation and legislation for nurses were made, and a most enjoyable and harmonious gathering melted away to catch cars and trains.

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