

During the winter months the aims of the Society have been placed before meetings arranged at the City Hospital, Edinburgh, the Western Infirmary, and the Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow, and in London and the vicinity at the Women's Institute, St. Andrew's House, the Chelsea Infirmary, and the Fulham Infirmary, and meetings will shortly be held at the Fountain Hospital, the Brook Hospital, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and the Pioneer Club.

Amongst other English-speaking people the outlook is encouraging. In Cape Colony, registration is already in force. More recently, largely owing to the efforts of one of our Hon. Members, Mrs. Grace Neill, a Bill was passed in New Zealand providing for the State Registration of Nurses, and is now working well, and New South Wales and Victoria are both working towards the same end.

In the United States, since the International Congress in 1901, active measures have been taken in support of the Registration movement. In three of the States—New York, Illinois, and New Jersey—Bills providing for the State Registration of Trained Nurses have already been drafted by the State Associations of Nurses, and are to be brought before the Legislature at an early date. Many other States are also considering the question.

Surely the fact thus demonstrated, that the movement for the State Registration of Trained Nurses is confined to no place or country, but is world wide, affords convincing proof, to those capable of being convinced, that it meets a universal need.

PROGRESS OF THE OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY.

One of the objects of the Matrons' Council is to bring about a uniform system of education, examination, certification, and State Registration for Nurses in British hospitals, and any steps in this direction taken by the authorities of training-schools are therefore worthy of note. This year the authorities of Guy's Hospital have inaugurated a preliminary training-school for nurses, and the Committee of St. Thomas's Hospital now gives a certificate at the end of three years' training.

THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD.

The President of the Local Government Board having appointed a Departmental Committee to inquire into the Nursing of the Sick Poor in Workhouses, Mrs. Wates, formerly Matron of the Lewis-ham Infirmary, attended before the Committee and gave evidence on behalf of the Council.

Her evidence was upon the following lines:—

1. The necessity for the formation of a Nursing Department in connection with the Local Government Board, with a trained and experienced Executive Nursing Officer in charge.

2. That the difficulties experienced in obtaining an adequate supply of properly-qualified nurses can only be met by the appointment of trained nurses as Work-

house Matrons. They should be responsible to the Guardians for the management of their department, and to the Medical Officer of the Workhouse for carrying out his directions as to the treatment of the sick.

3. That the efficient training of probationers in workhouses is an impossibility. Workhouse wards should, therefore, be officered by nurses holding a three years' certificate of training from a general hospital or infirmary.

In relation to these points, Mrs. Wates said:—

Properly qualified nurses are little inclined to workhouse nursing, and that for several reasons. It is hopeless to expect nurses to remain working under any conditions in lonely workhouses miles away from a town.

They have no hope of promotion as an incentive to such work.

They find their training no qualification for the best post in such institutions. They work under a Matron, chosen simply because she is the wife of the Master, with little or no experience of institution work, and no knowledge of the special work of the nurse.

Many nurses complain of *small salaries, poor food and accommodation.*

The work is uninteresting and monotonous, and nurses find, if they remain long at it, it is difficult or impossible to get posts in other institutions.

The inevitable friction where nurses work under such *divided authority* as now obtains in numbers of workhouses makes it impossible for a wholesome and necessary discipline to be enforced; habits of laxity and disloyalty are the result, which are as much feared by good nurses as by good Matrons, consequently the reputation of the workhouse nurse suffers.

In my opinion, these difficulties can only be met by the appointment of Matrons who are trained nurses, and who have gained experience in superintending the work of others in institutions.

Educated and trained women would end the difficulty, and there are numbers of suitable women who would be ready to fill these posts as they fall vacant.

There is nothing in the "Order" or in the details of work to hinder capable and experienced women from undertaking it.

Trained Matrons understand nurses and their work, can help them in emergencies, have sympathy with them in their difficulties, and will be capable of superintending the female staff.

Such a Matron will require, of course, separate suitable quarters and a good salary.

In the larger institutions she will need an assistant, who must also be trained in nursing. The nurses will then aspire to such posts as may in time lead to Matronships.

Until such time as trained Matrons be appointed in all workhouses, as a temporary arrangement, the Superintendent Nurse will be required; but I am entirely opposed to giving her the entire control of Infirmary, and making her independent of the Matron, where the Infirmary is not under separate administration. It is subversive of discipline, and the friction which it always entails will in some way react to the disadvantage of the patients. It would make the Superintendent Nurse the superior female officer, and the Matron was appointed as such.

2. The efficient training of probationers in workhouses is an impossibility. The nature of the cases under treatment does not allow of a sufficiently com-

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