

Annotations.

THE DUTY OF THE STATE.

At the annual meeting of the "National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-Minded," held at the residence of Lady Frederick Brudenell-Bruce, the President, she opened the proceedings by stating that there were at present 10,000 imbecile and feeble-minded persons in the workhouses throughout the country. The number was increasing, and the Association required more money and more assistance to enable it to cope with the great work in which it was engaged. The secretary was overworked, and would be glad to have assistance in the performance of her duties. This was a national work and ought to have national support, and they desired that pressure should be brought to bear on the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole of this important subject. Miss Louisa Twining said it was fifty years since she began her attendance at workhouses, and from the first she took a great interest in the objects of the Association. She had a strong conviction that the enormous extent of the evil rendered it impossible for private individuals to deal with it effectively, and that it was the duty of the State to take it up. It was a delusion to think that feeble-minded persons could be safely turned out after sixteen years of age, and she hoped the law would be so altered as to allow of the permanent detention of such persons. Mrs. Mylne expressed her agreement with Miss Twining as to the necessity of caring for these feeble-minded persons after they had reached the age of sixteen, for very few of them could become self-supporting. Sir William Chance moved a resolution expressing a strong opinion that a Royal Commission should be appointed to investigate and report on the condition and needs of feeble-minded persons throughout the country. He pointed out that it was only recently that the feeble-minded had been regarded as a different class from lunatics and imbeciles, and required special training so as to make them as far as possible become self-supporting, and thereby to lessen the probability of their becoming vagrant, pauper, and criminal. Dr. G. F. Still seconded the resolution. He was deeply impressed with the enormous number of feeble-minded children in this country, and was satisfied that unless some permanent care was provided for these they would inevitably swell the ranks of

pauperism and crime. He considered that the Association was doing a great work in stirring up an interest in this subject, and thus leading those in authority to deal with it on a large scale. Dr. Shuttleworth stated that on a moderate computation one child in every hundred born in this country required extra care, not that all were feeble-minded, for many were cripples or physically defective in some way. He pointed out that in the United States an institution for the care of the feeble-minded had existed for fifty years, and had worked exceedingly well. The resolution was adopted, and we hope it will rouse the Government to deal with this important question.

A STUDENTS' UNION.

The students of St. Bartholomew's Hospital have met, held animated converse, and founded a Students' Union, so that the Nurses' League has now a counterpart. It is very interesting to compare the spirit which animates both societies and the methods of work. The men go straight to the point and promptly consider their own status and well-being, and we learn that "the Committee during the first few weeks after its election confined itself entirely to the consideration of the accommodation for students in the prospective new buildings. Having drawn up a plan, the Committee applied to the Medical Council of the Hospital for a hearing. That body appointed three of its members to consider the scheme, and those gentlemen stated unofficially that they had no doubt the School authorities would gladly recognise such a Union as was suggested, and the whole tone of the proceedings went to prove that the Medical Council are not only keenly alive to the welfare of the students, but also are glad to receive their suggestions."

Quite so. Self-respect and moral courage are very high attributes, and invariably command respect.

The question of finance elicited the remark, "If students were to receive increased benefits from such a Union, why should they not pay for it?" This led to inquiries as to how the expenses of the Committee had been met, and resulted in a collection on the spot to cover them, the reading desk on Abernethy's table being circulated, upside down, as a collecting box.

Nurses' Leagues cannot do better than emulate the sensible and straightforward methods of the Bart's students. We wish the new Union all success,

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