

present period of transition of authority from the London School Board to the London County Council is an anxious one for the Society, and has had a bad effect upon its funds, as managers who formerly subscribed for a nurse to visit their schools are now inclined to hold their hands until their position under the new authority has been determined. It would be sad if the work of the Society were crippled for lack of the necessary financial support. Subscriptions may be sent to Miss Phipps, 3, Culford Gardens, S. W.

The last issue of the *British Medical Journal* contains an able and convincing reply to Mr. Sydney Holland's letter of the previous week on State Registration by Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, which, we hear, has had great weight with medical men. In the same issue an admirable letter appeared over the signature "M.B.," dealing with the question from the medical point of view, and expressing "the widespread dissatisfaction which exists among doctors and trained nurses with regard to the present state of affairs."

It is comparatively rarely that one hears of a bequest to a trained nurse, but Mr. Edward Brick, a banker of Baltimore, recently bequeathed to his nurse the sum of £2,000.

### The Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund.

By the kind permission of Emily Lady Amptill a meeting on behalf of the Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund was held at 19, Stratford Place, W., on Wednesday last. Lady Loch presided.

The first speaker was Mrs. Garrett Anderson, M.D., who remarked that some people seemed to be hounded by the Fates, and so it happened that, with the best intentions, some nurses were unable to make provision for disablement and old age. She suggested that the Fund might obtain additional support if patients were asked to add a shilling a week to the fees of their nurses for the definite purpose of supporting the Fund.

For some reason which was not apparent, Mrs. Anderson then left the subject before the meeting and discussed the question of State Registration. She had recently, she said, circularised the heads of nursing institutions, and called upon some of the secretaries and others in order to elicit their opinions on the subject. She found quite a number of intelligent persons opposed to it. In their demand for State Registration, the speaker said, she was not convinced that nurses were not considering their own interests more than those of the public and the medical profession.

A good deal of weight was brought to bear on the question by two or three ladies, but, as an old inhabitant of Aberdeen once said, "Tak awa' Aberdeen and ten miles round, and where are you?" There were those who thought that there was room for a variety of nurses, and this belief fitted in with her personal experience. There were times when she had cursed the trained nurse; she was a

terrible person. [N.B.—It was trained nurses whose cause Mrs. Anderson was avowedly espousing.] It was not every case that needed the superior nursing of the hospital-trained nurse. The best nurses for private patients were devoted women who would slave for their patients, unselfish, not hide-bound by the rules of hospital training. There was great difficulty in getting a highly-skilled nurse for £1 1s. a week. The sewere her views; she was not sure that they were acceptable, but, like Balaam's ass, she had been obliged to speak out.

The cause of the nurses, however, was safe in the hands of Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, who said many of those present had had experience of their own helplessness in the face of critical illness, and realised that the £2 2s. a week which they paid for a trained nurse, and the greater part of which often went to the institution which employed her, were a most inadequate return for services which were not requitable. In relation to the Annuity Fund, women who rendered such public service as the Queen's Nurses (at a salary of about £30 per annum) were entitled to provision for their old age. No profession, however, was on a satisfactory footing so long as its members were unable to provide against old age and accident. Such provision should not be left to private charity, but the cause of the inability to make such provision should be sought for and removed.

The public did not realise the large amount of manual work done by nurses in hospitals, while their earnings compared unfavourably with those of domestic servants, or the large amounts which they earned for the hospitals by private nursing, sums which, if given by lay people, would entitle the donors to the position of life governors of the institution.

Miss Barton, Matron of the Chelsea Infirmary, spoke very sympathetically in support of the Fund, and said if nurses did not always make provision for their old age out of their small salaries it must be remembered that they were a very generous body of women and placed the claims of others before their own needs.

Miss C. J. Wood also spoke of the need for such a Fund, and of the need of making its existence known.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick spoke in favour of the Fund, and said it met a need not otherwise provided for. Nurses continually worked on the borderland of a breakdown, and, through illness and other misfortune, might need help. She saw no more indignity in their accepting a pension after good work done, than in a Cabinet Minister, who was not in the least diffident in the matter, so doing. Although she did not know why the State Registration of Nurses was being discussed at the present meeting, she would like to point out that Mrs. Garrett Anderson, in making inquiries, had sought the opinion of hospital secretaries, superintendents, and others who employed nurses. Apparently she had not invited the opinion of the nurses themselves concerning their own affairs. The fact was that the nurses in large numbers were in favour of an improved system of education, a central examination, and Registration. The Royal British Nurses' Association, the Irish Nurses' Association, and all the self-governing Leagues of nurses were in favour of Registration.

Mrs. Fenwick concluded by saying that the welfare of the public in this matter was of paramount importance in the opinion of those working for the better organisation of the nursing profession.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)