

Rural Housing and Sanitation Association.

A most interesting and instructive drawing-room meeting on behalf of the above Association was held at the residence of Mrs. Scharlieb, M.D., 149, Harley Street, W., on November 9th.

Mrs. Scharlieb was in the chair, and the two speakers were Miss Constance Cochrane (member of the Advisory Committee on Housing to the House of Commons) and Dr. Dudley Buxton. Several ladies and gentlemen from amongst the audience also addressed the meeting, and a most animated discussion took place.

This is a subject which ought to interest nurses working amongst the poor in the country. Most of us have had to face the trying problem of not knowing how to act and what to do, in nursing the sick poor in their cottages, when the cottages belong to the landed gentry and farmers, who are subscribers to and perhaps on the committee of the Society supporting the district nurse.

Practically our position is as awkward and as weak as that of the medical officers of health, who are supposed to inspect the hygienic and sanitary conditions and the overcrowding in these cottages, which are frequently in a most deplorable condition. Miss Cochrane drew attention to the fact that it is as much as the practice, bread and butter, and peace of mind of these medical officers is worth to speak about, or draw the attention of the Government to the condition of the cottages which the landowners are letting to the poor. Dr. Buxton also remarked it was no good preaching to the people about ventilation and fresh air, when these cottages are so mildewed and so full of cracks that the occupiers are obliged to close up all the holes with rags and papers in order to keep the cold and damp out. It was no good preaching to the men to keep out of the public house when it was the only warm place they could get into and the only place of recreation outside an overcrowded house. It was no use preaching decency, modesty, and baths, when boys and girls were huddled together. It was the duty, therefore, of the nation to draw the attention of the Government to the present condition of the housing of the poor in rural districts, and this was the work and object of the Association, viz., "to act as an intermediary between the people and the Government." It was as much as the places of the cottagers were worth to let it be known that they had made complaints of the lack of water, or the dilapidated condition of their cottages, and as is well known in many

villages and rural districts cottages are scarce and difficult to get, and yet the gentry and farmers seem unwilling to build.

A letter was read, from Mr. Fels, who tried to solve the question from a socialistic point of view, but few felt they could agree with him on that subject.

One gentleman said he thought that if model houses were built, they might act as an object lesson. Miss O'Connor Eccles said she and her sister had designed model cottages and built them in Ireland and that many came to see them and were surprised at all the accommodation they provided in the small space they occupied.

But: model cottages, nay, model villages, have been built in England. The small farmers may be ignorant on the subject, but what about the nobility and landed gentry who are presumably educated and enlightened and have not built them? Is it apathy or mismanagement? If so, what heritage are they leaving for their off-spring and descendants? Are they willing that their sins should fall on their children down to the fourth generation? For, are they not sinning in housing their tenants in broken-down insanitary cottages, and are they not sinning in the misuse of their responsibilities and of their privileges? A point of practical usefulness for district nurses to bear in mind is that they may help this association (the office of which is at 9, Southampton St., Holborn, W.C.) by interesting themselves in these questions. E. R. W.

Reflections.

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



Dr. Farquharson, of Finzean, who was the first member of Parliament to introduce a Bill for the State Registration of Nurses, was presented on Saturday with handsome silver plate in recognition of his public services to the city and county of Aberdeen during the past twenty-five years.

Lady Faudel-Phillips has consented to open the after sale in connection with the bazaar held in June last for the Great Northern Hospital, Holloway Road, and to receive gifts on "Pound Day" in the board room of the hospital on the 29th inst. at half-past two o'clock.

The Earl of Kilmorey, chairman of Charing Cross Hospital, wishes to thank, on behalf of all persons who are interested in that institution, the six motor omnibus companies which have consented to cease using King William Street as a short cut to and from the Strand and Charing Cross Avenue. Lord Kilmorey

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