

Progress of State Registration.

THE OFFICIAL DIRECTORY OF NURSES BILL.

Lord Balfour of Burleigh gave notice in the House of Lords on Monday, that the second reading of the Official Directory of Nurses' Bill, which was down for consideration on April 2nd, was postponed till after the Easter Recess. This is the best of news, as in the short time in which it has been before the public the Bill has aroused an extraordinary amount of protest and opposition.

The fact that the Central Hospital Council for London, which only represents 20 Metropolitan hospitals, had privately drafted a Bill, in acute opposition to every principle incorporated in the Registration Bill promoted by trained nurses themselves, was naturally resented by the experienced and expert workers who have devoted so many years in attempting to arouse Parliament to a sense of its duty to the sick by granting to trained nurses a just measure of organisation and protection.

On Tuesday Lord Balfour of Burleigh received a deputation of five members of the Society for the State Registration of Nurses, and gave a courteous hearing to their views and wishes on the question of nursing legislation.

The Scottish Registration Committee, at a special meeting held in Edinburgh on Monday, decided to oppose the Directory of Nurses Bill, so that within a fortnight of its first reading representative English, Scottish, and Irish nurses' societies have met and expressed their determination to oppose the measure. We know that they are inspired with strong conscientious conviction that nothing short of a liberal scheme providing that a Register of Nurses should be kept by a Central Body appointed by the State, will meet the requirements of the case. All over the world, in our Colonies and elsewhere, such legal status is being granted to nurses, and we feel bitterly the injustice that a worthless and substitute scheme is being offered to us. We advise absolute loyalty to professional ideals at this crisis. Whatever happens, we shall then have done well.

We are glad to note from a statement made in the House of Commons by Mr. McKenna, President of the Board of Education, it is probable that to "a registration council representative of the teaching profession" may be assigned "the duty of forming and keeping a register" of teachers, instead of to the Board of Education. Unless a profession is self-governed, it is better without any legal status.

Books for Invalids.

It has often occurred to me that it must be a little difficult for a nurse to think of suitable books to read to a convalescent patient. Of course, if either the nurse or patient should have pronounced literary tastes the question is easily settled; but sometimes people turn to the kingdom of books for solace, who have not hitherto had time to become acquainted with much of the noble company therein. To such, a few notes of "comfortable literature" may be useful.

I say comfortable, because to avoid discomfort of all kinds must be the first consideration, and so political works, and many religious ones of the controversial order are barred. The sensational novel, and the up-to-date novel with its ending of unrelieved tragedy are also scarcely calculated to soothe; though some of the older novelists might be enjoyed. But to my mind the books that delight and soothe most in illness are essays and nature books. They make no tax on the memory, as a continued narrative does, but present to the mind a series of pictures, full of life, freshness, and truth, that can be enjoyed with little effort of thought.

We do not want those very sturdy writers, such as Carlyle, stirring us on with clarion voice to mighty thoughts and deeds of valour. Rather we want to be encouraged a little in our laziness, and made to feel that there is something to be said for the idlers. Neither do we want the mawkish and the morbid, to unnerve and depress spirits already weakened by suffering. Books that are gentle and sincere, cheerful but not boisterous, are the ones to seek.

The nature writings of Richard Jeffries are perfect examples of the books that are in my mind. In a series of word pictures we have the world of English field and hedgerow, flower world and bird world, drawn with dainty perfection, yet full of throbbing life. You can almost hear the lark singing, and feel the tall grasses brushing your face, as you lie and listen to his sweet sentences. And then how he shows the rich beauty of every-day scenes; as in that sketch called "Venice in the East," wherein he shows the wonder and poetry in an Australian bound cargo ship, waiting to leave the dock.

His nature writings can be enjoyed by those who know little and care less about science, yet no one can read them without gaining, almost unconsciously, some knowledge of the ways and doings of our fellow mortals.

In spite of the fact that he chronicles in the

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