

The Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses.

ANNUAL MEETING.

There was an enthusiastic audience at the Annual Meeting of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, held at the Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London, on May 2nd.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

The President, Miss Isla Stewart, was in the chair, and addressed the meeting on "The Danger of Disorganisation." Twenty years ago, she said, nurses were absolutely disorganised, now they were to some extent organised. The old simile held good. A twig was easily broken, but not so a faggot. So one nurse was helpless to effect reforms, but once nurses were gathered into an Association with one aim, they had made a step forward on the road of progress. It was not until Associations entirely composed of nurses inspired organisation that any progress was made. Quite recently the National Council of Nurses had been formed, through which, by affiliation with the International Council of Nurses, the members of the Societies which compose it are brought into touch with their colleagues of other nations, as well as those at home. The last twenty years, therefore, had not passed without development.

The danger of disorganisation in a profession was that the members were at the mercy of any persons who tried to exploit them. Such exploitation could only be combated through co-operation. Miss Stewart then gave as instances of dangers which had been averted by prompt organised action, the Scheme for "Promoting the Higher Education of Nurses," which emanated from a large London hospital, and which, if it had received the sanction of the Board of Trade, would have placed the control of the nursing profession in the hands of a few wealthy gentlemen who knew nothing whatever of nurses or nursing.

Another recent instance in which the organised Societies took action was when the Metropolitan Asylums' Board sought the sanction of the Local Government Board to degrade their Matrons from the position of first class officers. Strong protests were made with the result that it was very widely believed that this disastrous suggestion would never be sanctioned by the Local Government Board.

Miss Stewart then referred to the Bill "To Provide for the Establishment of an Official Directory of Nurses," now before the House of Lords. The Bill was drawn up and presented to the Lords without consulting the

nurses in any way. Children and idiots were legislated for without their consent, and apparently the promoters of the Bill were prepared to treat the nurses so. Neither the organised Societies of Nurses nor the medical profession had had an opportunity of considering the Bill, which had been quietly introduced into the House of Lords, and if it had not been for Mrs. Fenwick's all-seeing eye the Bill might have been read a second time without the nurses knowing anything about it. Under the Bill an Official Registrar, two or three Assessors nominated by an Order in Council, and none of whom need be nurses, would administer the law. She presumed, therefore, that the people who wished to govern nurses classed them with idiots. Again, however, action had been taken, and the views of nurses voiced.

The advantages of association were that nurses could express their own opinion on professional points with the weight of their Society behind them to help or hinder as the case might be.

Nobody was unimportant, and she urged every nurse to join some Association and so consolidate the profession to which she belongs.

THE ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Hon. Secretary, then presented the Annual Report and Audited Accounts.

The Report dealt with many important matters, which have already been reported in this Journal, and will shortly be in the hands of the members. Since the last meeting 296 new members have joined the Society, making a total of 2,333 since it was formed.

The Committee had taken prompt action upon the introduction of the Nurses' Directory Bill into the House of Lords, and Deputations had been received by the Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Lord Ampthill.

The Hon. Secretary had also communicated with a large number of influential persons and Societies, and a Memorandum had been presented to the British Medical Association, asking that Society to use its great influence to prevent the Bill from becoming law.

A large number of protests had been forwarded to Lord Balfour of Burleigh by English, Scottish, and Irish Nurses' Associations, and important Societies of Women.

The progress of Registration in Europe, the Colonies, and the United States, was reported and the indebtedness of the Society to the Registered Nurses' Society for the free use of its Board Room for meetings.

Mrs. Fenwick pointed out that owing to the great amount of work which the Association had been compelled to undertake, for the first

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