

of nurses were represented on the Council drafted in the new Bill, three of whom must be matrons. All good legislation provided that the class governed had voting powers, and the Registration Bill provided for the professional enfranchisement of the trained nurses, and thus gave them power to do their duty to the sick. The Registration question was primarily an educational one. Nurses asked that better educational facilities should be secured to them, and that their professional title should be defined by law. Of the matrons alluded to by Mr. Holland who opposed these just demands best say nothing. They were not free agents as officials of public institutions. To oppose their chairmen and committees would be contrary to the usual hospital etiquette and good discipline.

Mrs. Fenwick expressed her belief that Mr. Holland was really in sympathy with their demands, although he might not know it. Anyway, she hoped he would not continue to oppose them. They would welcome his help to get their Bill through Parliament.

Dr. Biernacki inquired why Mr. Holland approved a system of training, and of giving a certificate to nurses. What was the difference in principle between a hospital committee awarding a certificate and a central authority doing so? The medical profession did not expect registered nurses to be "brass angels," but it did look for a certain record of professional knowledge. If Mr. Holland considered registration useless it was strange that he took so much trouble to oppose it. If, on the other hand, he thought that the training in a few hospitals was now better than that in others, and that the efficient hospitals would be swamped if the others were brought into line, that reason was an extremely selfish one.

Mr. Holland said that the certificate of the London Hospital only guaranteed its nurses while they remained in its service, and there was a note on each certificate referring the public to the hospital.

Miss L. V. Haughton, Matron of Guy's Hospital, said that Registration might not be so imperative in the case of the nurses trained in the largest hospitals, but she had for some years been matron of a small hospital, and in the interests of small hospitals it was essential. She thought the large hospitals should consider their smaller brethren. If the teaching in all the smaller hospitals could be brought up to the minimum which would be required by a State authority the nurses in many of the smaller hospitals would have the advantage of better training, as many of them had nothing like that amount of teaching at present.

Dr. Goodall, President of the Fever Nurses' Association, said that he belonged to two associations which advocated registration of trained nurses, one most influential, the British Medical Association, and the Fever Nurses' Association, which was comparatively new. The latter association supported the Nurses' Registration Bill because it did not desire a separate register of fever nurses. He was not going to belittle the training given in fever hospitals, it was excellent in those branches in which experience was afforded; but nurses who received this partial training to his knowledge were

accepted by private nursing institutions, and supplied to the public as fully trained nurses, which they were not. This was absolutely unjustifiable. There was also in the neighbourhood in which he lived a large philanthropic body which gave women training in midwifery and sent them to nurse general cases in the homes of the poor. He believed State Registration of Nurses was coming and that fairly soon.

The Chairman at this juncture reminded the meeting that the time for closing the Exhibition was past. So ended a very interesting four days' Conference.

Nurses' Social Union.

By the courtesy of Miss Alexander, a very interesting meeting of the Union was held at her house, Campden Hill, on Friday, April 22nd. Other hostesses were Miss Alsop, Matron of the Kensington Infirmary, and Miss Clayton, Superintendent of the District Nursing Association.

Miss Alexander, in a few cordial words, welcomed the large audience and introduced the speakers.

Miss E. L. C. Eden—whom many will remember as having taken an active part in the International Nursing Congress, 1909 (of blessed memory!)—was the chief speaker. She gave an admirable and inspiring address. Being the Central Organiser of the N.S.U., she spoke with authority and force. The objects of this useful Union are:—

"To keep nurses in touch with other social workers and with the new developments of their own and kindred callings.

"To foster a true sense of citizenship among nurses and to utilise more completely their special knowledge, experience, and opportunities for the welfare of the community.

"To promote co-ordination in nursing work by mutual help and understanding, and to enable nurses to lay before an organised body the questions that concern them.

"To afford occasions for meeting fellow workers and for recreation.

"To hold up a high ideal of work and thought."

The chief notes struck by the speaker were *co-operation* and *citizenship*. She pointed out that co-operative work was forceful and strong, while individual work was limited; she desired to see nurses co-operate in things that endure; she emphasised the importance of the social as well as the professional side of the life, the necessity of avoiding the danger of narrow professionalism, which is apt to become aggressive shoppiness. Miss Eden made a strong plea for the lonely nurse, who lives and works alone in remote country places, who has no opportunities of keeping herself in touch with new and up-to-date movements; neither is she able to enjoy the relaxation and cheerfulness of social gatherings. It was the recognition of the need of making the lives of provincial nurses less isolated that led, nine years ago, to the founding of the N.S.U. in Somersetshire.

The enterprise had been so successful that it was proposed at the meeting to form a London centre.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)