

THE NURSING QUESTION IN HYDE PARK.

At a meeting in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon, when the presence of trained nurses was very noticeable, Miss Nina Boyle, of the Women's Freedom League, presided, and Miss Beatrice Kent was the speaker.

In the course of her opening remarks the chairman commented on the fees paid to trained nurses. Recently, when she thought she had got together a most capable little company of trained nurses for active service she enquired on what terms the nurses who required payment were to be engaged. Trained nurses, she remarked, were not ordinarily paid so extravagantly that they could afford to work for nothing. She was told that the salaries of these highly trained workers would be £1 is. per week. She then enquired as to the salaries of the male orderlies to be included in the unit. They were not trained in nursing, but had some knowledge of first aid. She found their salaries were to be 30s. a week and everything found. What fuddle it was that men should write as they did about nurses in silly novels and treat them so shabbily when they came down to actuality.

Nursing was not a man's job, it was marked down as a woman's profession, and it was the most important one in the world, because even the most brilliant doctor was helpless without the vigilance and skill of the trained nurse in caring for his cases. Yet, while a surgeon often received 100 guineas for performing an operation, the nurse who had charge of the patient was too often paid at the rate of an unskilled domestic.

She had heard it asserted that women did not deserve better treatment than they had because they did not know how to go on strike. Women *could* not strike. Their tools were too deadly. Suppose the hospital nurses went on strike for twenty-four hours, how many deaths would be the result? But, because they could not go on strike they were held cheap and treated badly, and she was there to support Miss Kent and others in their demand that the status and emoluments of nurses should be improved. They were going to hold a series of meetings to ensure that the public should at last be acquainted with the true position. It was said that there was a shortage of nurses for war work but there would be no lack under suitable conditions.

Miss Beatrice Kent spoke earnestly on the need of professional status and better conditions for nurses, and pointed out how intimately these questions concerned the public as well as the trained nurse. Nursing evolution had in the last sixty years proceeded rapidly, and there were opportunities for the work of the nurse on all sides, in hospitals and infirmaries, in the Government Services, in social service work, in preventive nursing. She then described the movement for State Registration, the progress it had made,

not only in this country, but throughout the world, and finally the action of seven laymen in forming a company through which they proposed to govern the nursing profession by the establishment of a College of Nursing. She contrasted the Bills for the Registration of Nurses promoted by the Central Committee for State Registration and the College of Nursing, describing the former as democratic and the latter as autocratic, and declared that nurses would no longer tolerate lay interference with their affairs, or feudal and tyrannical opposition to their demands.

In her concluding remarks the chairman said that the women were going to stand by the trained nurses and help them in their fight. They were not going to have a piece of specious legislation passed, if they could help it, to the eternal disgrace of the House of Commons.

In regard to the nursing in the present war, she expressed the opinion that trained nurses were not allowed near enough to the fighting lines. None were allowed nearer than fifteen miles. If the nurses wished to take the risk they had the right to decide, and if they had the choice, many a man would come home whole who came home maimed, and many a home would be happy which was now in bitter bereavement.

Many questions were put to the chairman at the conclusion of the meeting, and much sympathy expressed for the nurses.

THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND THE STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

At a meeting of the Council of the British Medical Association held on October 25th, the proceedings of which are reported in last week's issue of the *British Medical Journal*, the following statement appears:—

MEDICO-POLITICAL COMMITTEE.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR THE STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

It was agreed that although for the present the negotiations with the College of Nursing are interrupted, the representatives of the Association on the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses be instructed to join with the other bodies represented on that Committee in any further attempts which may be made to construct an agreed bill, and meanwhile to aid in the present policy of the Central Committee in introducing a Bill into Parliament on its own account.

Care will be taken that the representatives of the medical profession to be appointed upon the Provisional and Permanent Councils set up under any Bill shall be nominated by the British Medical Association.

In the Bill drafted by the Central Committee (and now amended and brought up to date) the

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