

And so, greatly daring, we take to astronomy! At least, the Astronomer Royal—Sir Frank Dyson—who so kindly gave us the lecture at the rooms of the Medical Society of London, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W., on the afternoon of February 7th, allowed us a peep into its mysteries, for to explore the whole field of this multiple science in one lecture would have been obviously impossible. There is nothing very astonishing after all in astronomy for trained nurses, because, if we claim to be educated women, a measure of it should form part of our education.

The lecture was made doubly interesting by limelight pictures. The first showed early structures built on the hill at Greenwich, where now stands the present famous Observatory. They were principally used as aids to navigation, rather than astronomy pure and simple. Pictures of the following famous Astronomers Royal were thrown on the sheet:—John Flamsteed, who lived in the reign of Charles II, and who invented instruments for calculating the position of the most important stars. He was succeeded by Halley who studied the variations of the compass, and made a voyage to verify the fact that the needle of the compass does not point precisely to the north in all parts of the world; this valuable labour was undertaken largely in the interest of navigation. He studied the problem of gravitation and induced Newton to publish his "Principia." Halley's name and fame is inseparable from "Halley's Comet," discovered by him in 1682, and which he correctly predicted would return in 1759, and thereafter at intervals of 75 years. The lecturer told us that it is believed to be the same comet that appeared shortly before the battle of Hastings in 1066 and also in the second and third century B.C.

James Bradley discovered the movement of the earth's axis, and is also famous for his theory of the aberration of light. Nevil Maskelyne is famous for many inventions for aiding navigation and for the first nautical almanack. It is difficult to curtail so interesting a subject, but the exigencies of space demand it. These brief notes must not be taken as the lecture *in extenso*. The art of photographing the stars was discovered by Sir William Christie, and many beautiful photographs in this connection were shown to us, and briefly explained including sun spots, and the best known constellations, and a wonderful photograph of Orion, which had occupied two hours of the patient astronomer's time, and the famous Milky Way.

Dr. Paterson, who presided, said it had been a very special pleasure to him to occupy the chair, as he and Sir Frank Dyson had been fellow-students at Trinity College, Cambridge. He proposed a cordial vote of thanks to the lecturer, which received a hearty response. A member of the audience proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman, whom, she said, although a busy man, always found time to do a kindness to nurses. The response was not less hearty.

B. K.

NURSING POLITICS.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS.

On February 13th the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Bonar Law) moved in the House of Commons, "That until the House otherwise determine, and so far as the House does not otherwise determine, no Public Bills other than Government Bills be introduced, and no ballot be taken determining the precedence of such Bills." This was agreed to.

Later, in discussing the Business of the House, it was agreed (1) that Government Business shall have precedence and (4) any Private Business set down, or Motion for Adjournment standing over under Standing Order No. 10, for consideration at a quarter past Eight o'clock on any day shall, if Government Business is concluded before that time, be taken at the conclusion of Government Business, and for the purposes of the preceding provisions of this Order shall be deemed to be Government Business. There is here, presumably, a wee loophole for private members interested in social reform legislation to get a hearing, but the net has a very fine mesh, as the Deputy Speaker or Chairman of Committees has the power to say whether private Bills brought forward involve subjects which are controversial.

The fact that no such Standing Order exists in the House of Lords places members of the House of Commons in a very anomalous position, and now that the War is in its 4th year many members think that there is no proper reason to distinguish between the two Houses in this way, and that it reduces membership of the House of Commons almost to a farce to be refused not the privilege, but the right of introducing Bills.

Until this Session legislation promoted by women, such as the Nurses' Registration Bill, although of utmost importance to the health and general welfare of the community, has been a negligible quantity—brought up session after session to be treated with the utmost contempt and neglect; but the Reform Bill granting votes to women and to many trained nurses has altered all that. Now those of us who are in real earnest that our most useful work shall be organized by the State, must be up and doing. No false sense of inferiority need now deter women citizens from urging upon legislators the necessity for reforms long neglected by them, and we hope they will make good use of the Lobby to see personally members known to them who are anxious to help the uplift of sections of the people often too ignorant to help themselves.

STATE ORGANIZATION. NOT STATE CONTROL.

But by State organization we do not mean State control. There is a wide difference between the two; and we are informed that the autocratic controlling power of the College of Nursing, Limited, has in view a form of legislation which would stamp out power of "self determination"

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