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## EDITORIAL.

### THE STARS IN THEIR COURSES.

#### THE VOTE COVERS ALL.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick was "At Home" on Friday, November 28th, "to meet Major Barnett, M.P.," known now throughout the nursing world as the man who gave the nurses their chance of State Registration, by giving precedence to the Central Committee's Bill for the State Registration of Nurses, when luck favoured him in the ballot.

The guests invited to meet Major Barnett were the officers and nurse-delegates on the Central Committee, and the faithful pioneers of the movement, just a few of whom were in it at the start—now thirty-two years ago—when the British Nurses' Association (later honoured with the prefix Royal) was initiated at 20, Upper Wimpole Street, on November 21st, 1887, to provide for the State Registration of Nurses. The gathering was animated by enthusiasm, and gratitude for favours to come—the Government Bill presented by the Minister of Health having been read a second time on November 18th with every hope of passing into law at an early date.

By request of the hostess, Major Barnett addressed the guests, and gave a very lucid report of the progress and obstruction of his Bill in the House of Commons this Session, which resulted in a pledge being given by the Minister of Health to bring in a Government Bill. This he had done, so far as his own jurisdiction was concerned; Scotland's Bill was drafted; and Ireland's Bill had been read a first time on November 26th, and was down for a second reading on November 27th.

Major Barnett gave an interesting account of his connection with the Bill, which was particularly illuminating, as showing the influence of the women's vote on legislation. During

the Parliamentary Election in South-West St. Pancras, Miss Beatrice Kent had, he said, instructed him on the subject of Nurses' Registration, and, indeed, impressed upon him that it was the only question that counted in politics. She had further secured from him a pledge that if he were elected, and were fortunate enough to win a place in the ballot, he would bring in the Central Committee's Bill for the State Registration for Nurses.

The likelihood of his being in a position to fulfil that pledge seemed rather remote at the time, but when at the beginning of the Session he drew what was practically the first place (by that time he had heard from Mrs. Fenwick also), he brought in the Bill, to the surprise of some of his colleagues, who took it for granted that he would utilise his good luck to deal with other burning questions.

Major Barnett showed how the Government Bill incorporated the main principles which the Central Committee had been formed to promote, and gave a very hopeful forecast as to its speedy passage into law.

Lieut.-Colonel Goodall, Hon. Medical Secretary of the Central Committee, on behalf of those present, thanked Major Barnett for coming to meet them, and for his clear explanation of the Government Nurses' Registration Bill, and Mrs. Bedford Fenwick for her long and strenuous services in the cause of Nurses' Registration.

The moral of Major Barnett's speech to veteran State Registrationists who for years vainly endeavoured to persuade members of Parliament (elected by male constituents) to ballot for a place for their Bill, is that "the Vote covers all."

Years ago Miss Lavinia L. Dock—the great nurse emancipator—said: "You will never get Registration until you have got the Vote." The whirligig of time has proved the truth of her prophecy.

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