

COMPLIMENTARY DINNER TO MAJOR R. W. BARNETT, M.P.

THE ROMANCE OF THE NURSES' REGISTER.

The Dinner arranged by Registered Nurses at the Hotel Metropole, London, on Thursday, February 5th, to do honour to Major R. W. Barnett, M.P., to whom they owe a deep debt of gratitude, was both a great occasion, and a great success.

Evidently the hostesses had made every effort to do honour to the occasion, and looked charming in a variety of new frocks, where uniform was worn it was beautifully neat and becoming. Many Nurses' Organisations which had worked to obtain the Nurses' Registration Acts were represented, and the whole gathering was permeated with very evident *joie de vivre*, characteristic of those who had won through so hard a struggle with courage and determination.

The Chairman, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, was the recipient of two beautiful bouquets, one of carnations and lilies of the valley, presented by Miss H. L. Pearse, S.R.N., Hon. Secretary of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, and the other by Councillor Beatrice Kent, S.R.N., President of the Professional Union of Trained Nurses, on its behalf.

After the guests had assembled Mrs. Fenwick and Major Barnett led the way to the St. James's Room, where 64 hostesses supported the Chairman. Never before have trained nurses foregathered to entertain a Member of Parliament to dinner, and not only for the Guest of Honour, but also for his hostesses the occasion was a memorable one, an historic occasion to be remembered in days to come as a Red Letter Day.

The scene when the company had taken their places, was one of gaiety and charm.

On the Chairman's right at the high table, were the Guest of Honour, Major Barnett, M.P., in the happiest of spirits, the Lady Hermione Blackwood, S.R.N. (Sister-in-law of Lord Novar, who, as Mr. R. C. Munro Ferguson, took charge of, and furthered the interests of the Bill in the House of Commons in its early days, and sister of his brilliant wife who supported the cause in reasoned, eloquent and witty speeches, and in articles in the press which carried weight by their logical force), Mrs. Willoughby Hodgson, the talented authoress of "The Quest of the Antique," Miss A. M. Bushby, S.R.N., R.S.C.N., member of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, Miss Cruickshank, S.R.N., R.R.C., Matron-in-chief of Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service, and the Rev. George Berens Dowdeswell (who is wed to one of our very nicest), who acted as Chaplain, and said grace when dinner was served.

On the Chairman's left were Miss Mildred Heather-Bigg, S.R.N., R.R.C., than whom the Registration Cause had no more loyal supporter, Miss Margaret Huxley, R.G.N., President of the Irish Matrons' Association, who braved the Irish Channel in a gale in order to be present, Mr. Herbert Paterson, C.B.E., F.R.C.S., Hon. Treasurer of the Central Committee, Miss H. L. Pearse, S.R.N., President of the L.C.C. School Nurses' Social Union, and Miss A. Stewart Bryson, S.R.N., R.F.N., formerly President of the Fever Nurses' Association. The setting of the dinner was delightful. The St. James's Room was ideal for the purpose, the tables beautifully decorated with crimson tulips and trails of smilax, the *Chef* served a Dinner worthy of the occasion, and the service was perfect.

There were some disappointments. Capt. W. E. Elliot, M.C., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary for Scotland, Viscountess Rhondda, and Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, D.Sc., Ph.D., F.L.S., J.P., could not be present owing to previous engagements. Dr. McGregor Robertson could not venture on the long journey after a sharp attack of in-

fluenza, Miss M. Steuart Donaldson, President of the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, Nurses' League, was prevented at the last moment from being present, and Miss Lamb, S.R.N., R.M.N., Matron of Claybury Mental Hospital, who had been invited to speak on the Mental Nurses' Register, was also unable to be present. Telegrams were also received in the room from Miss Charlotte R. Mill, S.R.N., formerly President of the Nurses' Association of India: "Best wishes for a delightful evening; from Miss S. A. Villiers, Member of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales: "Grateful greetings to Major Barnett," and C. B. M. sent a message from Cumberland: "Cumberland desires to salute 'a very gallant gentleman,' the State Register and its Champions."

THE TOASTS.

"THE KING."

At the conclusion of Dinner the Toast Master, having "prayed silence" for the Chairman, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick proposed the Toast of "The King," which was responded to with enthusiasm.

The Toast of the Evening.

"MAJOR R. W. BARNETT, M.P."

Again the Toast Master "prayed silence" for Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, State Registered Nurse, President of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, when Mrs. Fenwick rose and proposed the Toast of the Evening, "Major R. W. Barnett, M.P.," in the following speech:—

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is our delightful privilege to be present this evening to express to Major Barnett, our honoured guest, something of the gratitude and admiration in which he is held by every Registered Nurse who appreciates his unique services to the Profession of Nursing, and to the community at large, in connection with the passing of the Nurses' Registration Acts.

Of what great value his past services have been can only be gauged by appreciating that there is little happiness on earth without a high standard of health, and, how far-reaching and beneficent will be the result in attaining such human happiness through the Nurses' Registration Acts it is almost impossible to estimate.

It was that staunch registrationist, Councillor Beatrice Kent, who, living in the constituency of West St. Pancras, represented by Major Barnett, secured his promise, in 1919, that if fortune favoured him in the ballot, he would introduce the Nurses' Registration Bill, and after years of deferred hope the promoters of State Registration found the fulfilment of their professional aspirations within their grasp, when, favoured of fortune, Major Barnett found himself in a position to redeem his promise.

In Major Barnett we have the distinguished son of a medical man, in whose veins, moreover, is the blood of Thomas Whieldon, the great ceramic artist, High Sheriff of Staffordshire in 1787, whose exquisite pottery, inspired by a mind attuned to beauty, is very highly valued to-day by lovers of ceramic art.

Then Major Barnett is a man with a mathematical mind, with the training of a barrister, which enabled him quickly to understand the vital points in connection with the demand for the State Registration of Nurses (he took honours in Jurisprudence), and to present our case with a resistless logic in the House of Commons.

A crack rifle shot, our friend has represented Ireland in the International Match for the Elcho Shield on thirty-two occasions, which is a record score. He was one of the twelve representatives of the United Kingdom at the Olympic Games in 1908, and before that, champion chess-player of Ireland—from which we deduce that whatever he does he excels in, because he is a past-master in the infinite capacity for taking pains which is akin to genius.

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