

to reap the fruit of her labours and to guide the Fellows and Members on their way.

The College would, she hoped and believed, ever keep an open door for all schools of thought and learning—a centre of goodwill from which might go forth many true and earnest women carrying with them the bond of true fellowship.

The outward, or seen, was not, Mrs. Strong said, the whole of life. We had an inward, unseen life which if it be duly nurtured by conscious daily contact with the eternal verities would so mould the acts of our lives that they would declare the inward man.

Mrs. Strong concluded with the words: "My words are but few, but they are given in sincerity, and with an earnest wish that every member of this College will be true to the spirit of the sacred obligation taken by her."

The President then called upon Mrs. Lancelot Andrews to address the meeting.

SOUND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AS A BASIS OF PROFESSIONAL LIFE.

Mrs. Lancelot Andrews, F.B.C.N., speaking in reference to "Sound Economic Conditions as a Basis of Professional Life," said that a sound economic basis involved not merely cutting one's coat according to one's cloth, but the possession of funds to ensure a continuous supply of cloth.

It was unusual in the foundation of a professional Association, and unique in Nursing, to have a really sufficient supply of funds and there came a moment when it had to be decided how the fundamental expenses necessary to development and extension of membership were to be met.

If the funds were not sufficient then the Association was crippled and its usefulness curtailed or stultified.

The methods by which it was sought to raise funds were not always desirable; but owing to its generous anonymous friend The British College of Nurses was happily in possession of an income of £5,000—a great foundation but not inexhaustible, and the Fellows and Members must subscribe an adequate sum too if it was to be maintained on a sound financial basis.

It was not a small thing that was asked of them, for it was the first time in the history of Nursing that Nurses had been asked to pay a really adequate subscription, but things worth having in this world were worth working for, if necessary fighting for, and paying for. She gathered from the speech of the Treasurer that further great Gifts might be available if the Nurses responded to that already given to them. They were further ensured *Independence* in their professional organisation of the will and whims of their employers, *Freedom* to work and struggle for the principles for which they stood, *Self Respect* because they would be self-supporting. The possibilities therefore were almost unlimited.

Mrs. Andrews said, lastly, that she considered it the duty and privilege of all who join the College, especially the Matrons, and those concerned with the education of young nurses to refrain from attempting to *compel* them to come in, but to carefully *explain* all its advantages, and to repeat, and repeat, and repeat these explanations until others come to understand and believe.

THE CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY OF THE REGISTERED NURSE.

The President then said it was with great pleasure she announced that Major Sir Richard Barnett, M.P., was the next speaker.

Major Sir Richard Barnett, who was greeted with great applause, said that after the speeches which had been already made it was difficult at short notice to make an

adequate speech on "The Civic Responsibility of the Registered Nurse." In this connection he related a story of the great Bossuet. The King had been told that he was good at extemporary preaching, and commanded him to preach before him in the Chapel Royal, adding to the message that M. Bossuet would find the text for his sermon under the cushion in the pulpit. Arrived in the pulpit, he looked under the cushion, and searched this way and that, but found nothing. Finally he concluded that "Nothing" was the subject upon which he was expected to preach, and taking as his text, "We brought nothing into this world, neither can we carry anything out of it," he preached such an eloquent and tactful sermon that at its conclusion the King sent for him, and said, "M. Bossuet, you came into the Louvre with nothing, but you go out of it with the Abbey of Beauvais."

With regard to the Civic Responsibility of the Registered Nurse, the principal point of course was that she had, or would have, the right to exercise the Parliamentary franchise. But there was a question about this that was perhaps worth noting, namely, that a nurse's profession often deprived her of the possibility of exercising the vote. The names of Soldiers and Sailors were on the absent voters' list, and he was of opinion that this privilege might also be extended as of right to Registered Nurses.

Being possessed of the vote, Nurses should regard it as their duty to exercise it.

Sir Richard concluded by saying that it was the civic responsibility of the Registered Nurse to be a good citizen, and she had already given her proofs by adopting a profession so arduous and so ill-paid. But if the rewards of her calling were few, at any rate there was the knowledge that it was a noble vocation animated by the highest ideals and inspired by the finest examples.

As one who was proud to have been allowed to lay one humble brick in the edifice of the State Registration of Nurses, he claimed the privilege of congratulating Mrs. Bedford Fenwick who, after years of strenuous endeavour in that cause, now found her work recognised and crowned by her appointment as President of the British College of Nurses. Might she live long and make the new Institution a great and enduring success!

PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS TO FOUNDATION FELLOWS AND FOUNDATION MEMBERS

The Presentation of Diplomas by the President to 244 Foundation Fellows and 77 Foundation Members, the principal event in the day's proceedings, was accomplished in an incredibly short space of time. Marshalled by the twelve stewards, ladies who performed their duties with military discipline, each in turn mounted the platform to be graciously welcomed and her hand clasped by the President, received her Diploma with evident pleasure, and returned to her seat, possessed of the highest honour which it is in the power of the Nursing Profession to bestow.

VOTES OF THANKS.

Mrs. Berens Dowdeswell, B.Sc., F.B.C.N., in proposing votes of thanks to the Donor, the President, the Speakers and Canon Donaldson, said that she could not express what she felt when she opened her *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING* a year ago, and read the simple statement that £100,000 had been given by an anonymous Donor to found a British College of Nurses. She read the words several times. We had dreamt of such a College, here and now our dreams were taking shape. Words could not thank the Donor, but our hearts were full of gratitude. Our thanks were also due—

To the President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, for the unstinting devotion with which she had placed her great

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)