

## REGISTRATION DAY.

The Registration Day Birthday Party was held this year on December 16th, at 4.30 p.m., at the termination of the Council Meeting in the Secretary's Office, which the office staff had tastefully decorated with holly, mistletoe and lovely flowers.

In the centre of the room and placed on a cloth magnificently worked by a Councillor, was the splendid iced Cake, inscribed "British College of Nurses" with a replica of the seal of the College in marzipan, and below in crimson letters, "Registration of Nurses, 1919-1933."

When some fifty Fellows, Members and their friends had assembled, Miss Isabel Macdonald delighted the audience with a most able address on "The Story of the Royal Hospital and Collegiate Church of St. Katherine's by the Tower," followed by a résumé of the discussion which led to the adoption of a Resolution by the International Congress of Nurses, 1933, in favour of compulsory State Registration of Nurses.

In expressing warm admiration, the President, Mrs Bedford Fenwick, thanked Miss Macdonald for the literary treat she had given those present, in unfolding the History of the Royal Hospital and Collegiate Church of St. Katherine's, and also for her concise résumé of the discussion at the I.C.N. Congress, 1933, which resulted in the passing of a Resolution in favour of compulsory State Registration of Nurses.

### THE CUTTING OF THE CAKE.

This year celebrated the fourteenth Birthday and the nine members of the Council present then each lighted a taper: Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President; Miss A. M. Bushby, Vice-President; Miss M. G. Allbutt; Miss H. G. Ballard, Miss M. S. Cochrane, R.R.C., Miss J. C. Cowie, Miss D. K. Graham, Miss G. Le Geyt and Miss I. Macdonald. Miss Beatrice Kent acted for Miss M. Breay, Vice-President, whose absence was much regretted. Miss N. Farrant, Miss K. M. Latham, R.R.C., ex-Councillors, and Miss E. T. Bickerton, R.R.C., and Miss Elma Smith, staunch supporters of State Registration since the beginning also took part, so completing the lighting of the fourteen tapers.

The President then cut the cake, which was handed round on the much prized Sir Richard Barnett Memorial Silver Salver. Amid the gay exchange of greetings over the tea cups, and pulling of crackers, the fourteenth Birthday of State Registration of Nurses was perhaps the gayest we have had.

### THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF ST. KATHERINE'S BY THE TOWER.

We will make but a short reference to Miss Macdonald's address on that ancient foundation—the Royal Hospital and Collegiate Church of St. Katherine's by the Tower, for we propose to publish the paper in full at some later date; the subject is an important one from an historical point of view and also the address will be useful as a kind of explanatory preface to the next sequence of articles on the Historic Royal Nurses, who, in nursing history, have connections with St. Katherine's. Miss Macdonald said that the fate of St. Katherine's might be said to lie in a trinity of sorrow, courage and avarice, as revealed in the grief of Matilda, the Founder, the spirit and courage of Eleanor the Re-founder and, thirdly, in the avarice arising out of the materialism of the nineteenth century. The story of the origin of St. Katherine's lead up to the recapitulation of legends connected with St. Katherine, a Royal Saint, Martyr and Scholar, who lived very early in the fourth century. The reference to her is particularly interesting at the present time in view of the fact that the monks of the Monastery on Mount Sinai acquired her relics and preserved them in this very monastery which, for so many

centuries, was the resting place of the Codex Sinaiticus; this famous copy of the Bible belongs to the same century as St. Katherine.

Many were the vicissitudes traced in the development of St. Katherine's, vicissitudes which have made it something more than a mere erection of stone and lime. The lecturer followed the story, indicating the direction which this event or the other gave to the growth of this, the oldest religious community in England and the most precious jewel, in the matter of architecture as well as tradition, that East London could ever have possessed or hoped to possess. Its history was traced down through the patronage of a line of thirty-two queens and the incidents were related which caused it to survive when other religious houses disappeared at the Reformation. The position of the Sisters and the status and dignity which they enjoyed was explained and details were given as to how, through her Charter of Statutes for St. Katherine's, Queen Philippa might be regarded as the first official foundress of district nursing.

But the day came when there was no Queen to protect St. Katherine's. Queen Charlotte was dead, the Regent was in power. An offer of £125,000 was made for the site by a company, with an added £50,000 to build a modern something that could be dubbed St. Katherine's. The Dock could perfectly well, according to authorities, have been built elsewhere. But—£125,000—that was set against and triumphed over the loveliness of the old place, over graves hallowed from the twelfth century, rare old carvings in a rare old setting, an age long dignity and the ancient towers with their lights shedding a welcome or farewell to ships passing on the river in the night—it was all taken down and the lands of the Hospital, Chapel and Precinct submerged. The £125,000 has gone—whither? But there still live the great traditions of St. Katherine's although, alas, no longer focused about the old Church that stood by the river.

The President spoke a few words in appreciation of the address and said every one who had listened to the glorious history of its foundation had learned with indignation of the act of vandalism which had swept away St. Katherine's.

After a short interval, Miss Macdonald gave a résumé of what took place at the meeting, where, in Paris, the International Council of Nurses affirmed its opinion that State Registration of Nurses should be compulsory. The Resolution passed at a Sectional Meeting of the Congress was read and the speaker enumerated certain points which she had stressed as, for instance, the question whether anything short of compulsory Registration gave adequate protection to the sick. Compulsory Registration would make a clear line of demarcation between those who had attained to a definite minimum standard of qualification and those who had not, and would also tend to level upwards the teaching and training of nurses. The subject of the effect of compulsory Registration on the economic position of the nurses was discussed, especially as it would be affected by the resulting supply and demand; reference was made also to the need for a definite minimum standard of knowledge, not only for nurses engaged in hospital work, but also in other branches, pre-eminently those of private nursing and health visiting. As regards the oft repeated contention that compulsory Registration would prove a hardship to the partially trained, who had hitherto used the title of nurse, Miss Macdonald said that the English language could be relied upon to supply a descriptive title for them which would indicate their capacity so that the public would employ them for what they were.

Mrs. Fenwick in closing the Meeting said that it was a matter of first importance that this great body, the International Council of Nurses, had taken the initiative in this reform, and had pronounced in favour of compulsory State Registration of Nurses.

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