

## THE BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

## FIRST MEETING.

AT LAST! a serious effort, an effort which we think will eventually be crowned with great success, has been made to place upon a satisfactory footing the large body of some 15,000 nurses in the United Kingdom. At the first (a fully representative) meeting, held on December 10th last, it was unanimously agreed that a British Nurses' Association should be formed, and that among its objects should be the following: the obtaining of a charter that will enable the association to examine and register nurses, and to confer degrees; the devising of schemes for annuity pensions and sick funds for nurses; the formation and managing of a convalescent home and holiday-house for nurses; the founding and managing of alms-houses for superannuated nurses; and the organisation of conferences on questions relating to the nursing profession. Certain bye-laws were passed, a general council formed, and an executive committee constituted, on which the following ladies consented to act:—

Mrs. Deeble (Netley Hospital), Miss Hogg (Haslar Hospital), Miss Stewart (St. Bartholomew's Hospital), Miss Jones (Guy's Hospital), Miss Thorold (Middlesex Hospital), Miss Wood (Children's Hospital), Miss Sutcliffe (Women's Hospital), Miss Clarke (Western Fever Hospital), Miss East (National Hospital), Miss Mollett (Chelsea Infirmary), Miss Close (Kensington Infirmary), Miss Beachcroft (Lincoln County Hospital), Miss Rogers (Leicester Infirmary), Miss Gibson (Brownlow Hill Infirmary, Liverpool), and Miss Huxley (Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin). Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, lately matron of Bartholomew's Hospital, and five other ladies, were also nominated to act with the above.

## SECOND MEETING, FEBRUARY 13TH.

HELD in St. George's Hall, Mr. Savory, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, occupying the chair. A still greater success, for the hall was completely packed, and the proceedings thoroughly unanimous. Among those present were—

H. R. H. Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein (President of the Association), attended by Miss Loch, Mr. Savory, Sir Joseph Lister, Sir Dyce Duckworth, Sir Joseph Fayrer, Sir Henry Acland, Professor Marshall, Dr. Quain, Dr. Douglas Powell, Mr. Tom Smith, Mr. Langton, Dr. Bedford Fenwick, Dr. Matthews Duncan, Dr. Samuel Fenwick, Mr. Brudenell Carter, Dr. Langdon Down, Dr. S. Sibley, Dr. Norman Moore, Mr. Wakley, and other members of the medical profession; Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Mrs. Deeble (of Netley), Miss Wood, Miss Stewart, Miss East, Miss Sutcliffe, Miss Heherington, Miss Mollett, Miss Huxley (of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin), the Sister Superior of University College Hospital, Miss Thorold, Miss Barton, Miss Cooper, Dowager Countess of Shrewsbury, Mrs. Jeune, Mrs. Lankester, Mr. Oscar Wilde, and matrons, sisters, and nurses from metropolitan, provincial, and naval and military hospitals.

H. R. H. PRINCESS CHRISTIAN said:

"I have been asked to say a few words to open this meeting—a meeting the interest and import-

ance of which cannot be overrated. We are met here to-day to lay the foundation-stone of an association which should not be inferior to any great institution in the kingdom. I said 'lay the foundation-stone,' but that is already laid. We have rather met to enlist public sympathy and support in furthering and holding it up. The British Nurses' Association seeks to unite in common action all who are engaged in woman's highest and noblest work, viz., nursing the sick. The first object of the association is to obtain for the calling of nursing the recognised position and legal constitution of a profession which shall henceforth be inseparable from the profession of medicine. It will follow from this that in the future every member of the nursing profession must have been educated up to a definite standard of knowledge and efficiency. The importance of this guarantee to the public cannot be over-estimated. Another object is to enable the members to assist each other in illness or old age. But the organisation has a deeper, a wider, a grander meaning. I believe it is the first instance of a large number of women combining, not only to help their overworked and weaker sisters, but also to advance their calling and raise their work to a higher level than it has hitherto attained. If the association be successful—and success now depends on the efforts of the nurses themselves—who can foretell where the influence of their example will end? It will, perhaps, be the means of showing women in other walks of life that they, too, can combine successfully, to the advantage of themselves, their fellow-workers, and society in general, in striving after higher things. I should like to say how much I feel personally the great honour done to me in allowing me to become your fellow-worker in this great movement, and I will conclude with some lines which seem to me to embody the true spirit of nursing—

'It is perfect service rendered, duties done,  
In charity soft speech and stainless days;  
These riches shall not fade away in life,  
Nor any death dispraise.'

Mr. Savory, who, on rising, was received with applause, said:

"In venturing to say a few words on the subject which brings us together to-day my chief difficulty is this, the cause we have before us is so good and strong that it needs no advocacy from those who recognise the necessity of good nursing for the sick. In this difficulty I have tried to imagine an opponent to respond to me; but I can find no argument worthy of serious discussion. And who with illness near him dreams of refusing such help? In this case human nature has but one voice. In no department can we forget the change which has taken place in the art of nursing. What nurse of the present day can be properly called a descendant of the old hospital nurses? I would fain linger on this scheme,

*previous page*

*next page*