

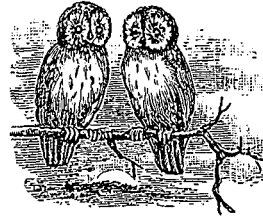
causing should be taken from them for the support of a Hospital, however great the amount of good it may be doing. Or is it desirable that the proprietors of private Nursing Institutions should realise their thousands per annum out of the lives of these women, who in some instances are sent from patient to patient until they are so wearied that they are unable to resist the malarious influences to which they are exposed, and their lives are sacrificed for the benefit of their employers. Whether these employers are public Hospitals or private Institutions, the system is so unjust and undesirable that it only needs public attention to be directed to it to ensure its alteration."

We believe there are some twenty "Nurse Farms," attached and unattached to Hospitals, flourishing gaily in our midst, and making cent. per cent. profits on their Nurses and Probationers' labour. We can but hope that the Registered Nurses' Society, at 269, Regent Street, whose staff of trained Nurses have all passed through a three years' course of training, and the Co-operation of Nurses, in New Cavendish Street, will, with their combined efforts to gain for Nurses full remuneration for their arduous work, encourage the medical profession, and the public, only to employ those Nurses who receive their own fees. It is a gross scandal that the middleman *can* exist in such a sphere, and we can but express an opinion that the Nurses themselves are greatly to blame for placing themselves in a false and discreditable position.

WE are informed by a contemporary, that in the "Revolt of the Daughters" as set forth nightly in a ballet at a Metropolitan Theatre, the emancipated woman has at last obtained what so many men-writers on the subject have assured us is the only thing she wants: a full control of the latch-key—and one scene in the representation shows the use it is expected she will make of it when she has it. A gambling-house frequented by "the woman with a vote"; small tables dotted about crowded with eager-eyed young femininity; when suddenly the hue and cry of police was raised. A raid has been formed to suppress the budding baccarat players, but woman's wit has forestalled the event. In a moment the gamblers are transformed into Hospital Nurses in full uniform; one of their number is ranged as a patient on a billiard table, extemporised into an operation bed; and the quondam card-sharpers are seen bending over the sufferer in various attitudes of pity and ministering tenderness; bathing the brow and arranging the flowers, and doing those hundred and one little offices for the sick that figure so largely in novels. The scene is touching, but it is too well done and the suspicions of the police are aroused. Finally, amid the applause of the audience, the troupe of "sham nurses" beats an ignominious retreat through the windows, and thus frustrate the attempt of a vigorous County Council to form the young idea on conventional lines.

## Matrons in Council.

*Is the formation of a Matrons' Council desirable? and, if so, what should be its programme of work?*



MADAM, — I think, with your correspondents, that the time has come when a Matrons' Council, Association, or Society, call it what you will, ought to be formed. Hitherto, Matrons have been isolated beings, having no wish to know what other Matrons do or think, having great confidence in their own methods as being almost inspired, almost infallible. We, who belong to the Royal British Nurses' Association, have gradually awakened to the futility of this dignified seclusion; even the little intercourse we have together in its meetings or social gatherings have helped us to wider views, and to greater respect for our fellow Matrons. But at those times when we talked of our work or our difficulties we felt it was "shop," and we have done it stealthily and with shame-facedness. It has helped us so much that we feel that now we need a "Council," where we can meet together for this purpose, and openly and with confidence discuss our work, our difficulties, our ambitions, and our hindrances.

Professions being composed of human beings, are not of wood or iron that they should never change. Rather they are organic bodies, growing and changing insensibly, and accommodating themselves to outside influence and pressure in a subtle manner; the magnitude of which change one only realises when one looks back over a decade's work and progress. "The rate of change," says Karl Pearson, "may vary from century to century, from nation to nation, but it is ever continuous, ever developing new phases, ever startling the old and inspiring the young." It is for us, each one, to decide whether we will, by united and concerted action, grasp that progress and carry it into, what we believe to be, the safer channel; or whether we will be but obstacles in its path, not hindering it one iota by our presence; but being hurled aside or moulded by it, as a stone is in a swiftly flowing stream. To attempt the former and nobler course, we must have the union which an association gives. The Matrons' Council seems the best way of securing this needed strength on a business-like and practical basis.

That last phrase brings me to another reason for the formation of this Council, which has been much brought before me of late, and that is the need of a business education for Matrons and some experience in the conduct of meetings and the power of chairmen. Women so often know what they want, but either do not know how to state their needs, or are not sufficiently courageous to hear the sound of their own voices unmoved. To quote Miss Baggott in her description of a school of method:—"Mrs. A. is too timid to talk aloud, and, therefore, instead of addressing the lady or gentleman in the chair she whispers to Mrs. B., and when bright Mrs. C., who does

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)