

The Matrons' Council.



A meeting of the Matrons' Council was held at 20, Hanover Square, on May 8th, Miss Isla Stewart, President, presiding. Before the business began, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Senior Councillor, on behalf of the Council, asked Miss Stewart's acceptance of a bouquet of roses as a very small token of its respect, and of its recognition of its indebtedness to its President. Not only the Matrons' Council, but the whole profession of nursing, owed much to Miss Stewart

for the way in which she had supported its interests and had always been to the fore when action was desirable. She hoped it would be placed on record—indeed, she knew it would be—when the history of the development of the nursing profession was written, that during the whole of the contentious period which seems inseparable from the early stages of any profession Miss Stewart had always stood out on the side of right.

Miss Stewart having thanked the Council for its gift, which was, she said, quite an unexpected pleasure, the minutes of the last meeting were taken as read, and confirmed. She then delivered her

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

LADIES,—Once more it is my duty and pleasure to welcome you to our Annual Conference. Our first Conference was held in 1898, and, with the exception of 1901, when our energies were concentrated on the International Congress at Buffalo, it has been an annual fixture, one which personally I regard as a very pleasurable one, and I believe this view is shared by all who have taken part in these meetings.

There are present to-day many of our members who have come long distances to attend our meetings, and I should like to say how much we, in London, appreciate the effort—for it involves real effort on the part of busy women such as hospital Matrons—which you make to be present. We value your presence, your support, and the practical counsel which is your contribution to our deliberations.

It is well from time to time to take stock of our position, and to find out what progress we are making in the objects for which we are associated together. They are three:—

1.—TO ENABLE MEMBERS TO TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER UPON MATTERS AFFECTING THEIR PROFESSION.

We have beyond doubt proved that the Council is an effective medium through which to obtain valuable advice on professional subjects as they arise. To take only one instance. When the British Gynæcological Society recently asked for the advice of this Council, the points for discussion at the Conference convened were sent round to our Councillors and Vice-Chairmen,

and to members who are Matrons of Hospitals for Women. The result was that we received some very pertinent letters, which were read at the Conference, and much appreciated by it. It is a great thing to have a medium whereby we can obtain, at short notice, a consensus of opinion on matters of this kind.

2.—TO BRING ABOUT A UNIFORM SYSTEM OF EDUCATION, EXAMINATION, CERTIFICATION, AND STATE REGISTRATION FOR NURSES IN BRITISH HOSPITALS.

Well, we are struggling for it. The foundation of all these things is State Registration, and as soon as we get that the rest will be the natural outcome. Last year, as you know, we felt that the work for State Registration had outgrown the powers of a sub-committee to perform, and we launched a society with the sole object of obtaining a Bill. You will hear later, in detail, of the work of this young and vigorous Society, therefore I will content myself with saying that its success has justified the wisdom of the step taken in forming it.

One bit of work in connection with education has engaged our attention this year. As you know, we brought before the Council of Bedford College for Women the need which exists for a Course in Hospital Economics which can be taken, after their hospital training, by nurses who give evidence of executive ability. The Council of the College received our proposal most favourably, and invited Mrs. Fenwick and myself to confer with their Board of Education on the subject. The difficulty in establishing the Course is, as usual where women's education is concerned, one of £ s. d. It is worthy of the attention of those who are interested in the higher education of women and the more efficient nursing of the sick.

3.—TO HOLD CONFERENCES TO DISCUSS SUBJECTS OF PROFESSIONAL AND ALSO OF GENERAL INTEREST.

Our presence here to-day proves that we are endeavouring to further this object of our Council.

Before I bring these remarks to a close I should like to remind you that next year the International Council of Nurses meets in Berlin at the same time as the International Congress of Women. It behoves us to consider how we are to be represented, for I take it for granted that we all consider that we must be represented on that occasion. We have learnt the power of co-operation, and we have proved the value of conference with the nurses of other nations, and know that such meetings are fruitful in good results. Let me commend to you the idea that it is our duty, as a Council, to be represented at Berlin. Let me also suggest to you that a holiday in Berlin is within the power of many Matrons to compass.

The President then called upon the Hon. Secretary to read the

REPORT.

Since the Annual Meeting of the Matrons' Council in January the Annual Report then adopted has been printed and circulated.

Miss Annie A. Barling, Matron of the Infirmary and Children's Hospital, Kidderminster, has accepted the position of Vice-Chairman, vacated by Miss Mollett on her appointment as Councillor at the expiration of her term of office.

In accordance with the instructions of the Council, the resolution passed at the Annual Meeting drawing

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