

and of freely discussing these questions amongst themselves, can hardly be over-estimated.

The whole system of Nursing education is at present so chaotic; there are such widespread and deplorable jealousies between different training schools, fostered by the littleness and ignorance inevitable upon their isolation; the details of the systems pursued in different institutions are so little known outside their respective walls, that the mere discussion of these matters, amongst Matrons gathered together from different parts of the country, must necessarily have the most beneficial results in establishing improved methods and a greater uniformity of education, than could be possibly arranged without such free interchanges of practical experience. We were glad to know that the Conference of 1896 led to various useful improvements in certain hospitals; and so there is much reason to hope that equally useful results will follow from the Conference which has just closed. Matters of discipline and organization have been explained, illustrated and criticised, in a manner which must tend to the elimination of details which have proved to be useless, and the substitution of methods which experience has shown to be advantageous.

On this occasion, also, the advantage afforded by such a gathering for private conferences has been abundantly proved. More than one professional question, especially with reference to the Royal British Nurses' Association, has been discussed by the Matrons *in camera*, and consequently with perfect freedom. We have no hesitation in believing that the decisions, which have thus been arrived at, will prove to be wise and far-reaching in their results, and that, even if these decisions were the sole outcome of the meeting, they would afford more than sufficient evidence of the value of such conferences amongst hospital Matrons. But it is not too much to say that, with such a widely scattered body as the superintendents of hospitals are, it would be almost impossible to obtain any effectual interchange of views and opinions amongst them, except by means of such public and private conferences as have just been held.

The Matrons' Council, then, has more than justified its existence by the work which it has already accomplished, and the benefits of its membership to Matrons are now made so obvious that we trust it will not be very long before every hospital Matron in the United

Kingdom has joined its ranks. We understand that between seventy and eighty Matrons have already become members of the Council; and we would suggest that, during the coming year, each member should determine to persuade at least one other Matron to join its ranks. As we have previously shown, there are, at this present moment, urgent reasons for Matrons to join together, in order to obtain that strength which Union alone can give; and recent events must surely compel most of them to consider it their duty, not only to themselves, but also to the profession of which they are the natural leaders, to join hands with other Matrons in order to protect their rights and to maintain their just privileges, which are being so seriously threatened.

The Nursing Conference.

MATRONS IN COUNCIL.

THE first Annual Conference of the Matrons' Council has come and gone, and there was but one opinion expressed with regard to it—that of hearty enjoyment, and of regret that it came so quickly to a close. Of the representative nature of the gathering there could be no question. It was presided over by Miss Stewart, the Matron and Superintendent of Nursing in the First Royal Hospital in England. Leading Matron Members were present from all parts of England, and Miss Huxley, of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin, represented Ireland. The breadth of the sympathies of the Council were evinced by the cordial reception accorded to an American nurse who rose to speak, while the mention of the names of Mrs. Robb, President of the American National Society of Associated Alumnae, Miss McIsaac, President of the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools, Miss Dock, Secretary of the American Society of Superintendents, and Miss Snively, Matron of the General Hospital, Toronto, all of whom have done most valuable work in organizing the nursing profession in the United States and Canada, evoked rounds of hearty applause. A Canadian lady also expressed the extreme pleasure it had been to her to be present at the meetings, and the general public testified to their interest in the proceedings. The literary merit of the papers, as well as the able manner in which they dealt with the questions in hand, elicited considerable

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)