

attacked by it. You are not called upon to consider nationality at all, you are not called upon to consider social constitution at all. I suppose that the same thing that would be considered good for a Duchess would be considered good for a drudge. I suppose that the bandage, the instrument in the hands of the surgeon, the poultice in the hands of the nurse, the cooling draught, the quickening potion that would be best adapted to a Queen, attacked by a certain illness, would be, if it could be commanded for her, equally adapted for the peasant; and it seems to me that I am looking into the faces of women who may, more easily than women in other professions, lift themselves out of the clutches of prejudice into the freer realm where the International Idea was born and must expand. In my own country, I have heard a doctor called a democratic doctor, a republican doctor, and I have always thought it the most amusing of all our amusing Americanisms; but I assure you that when a leader of the Republican Party is taken ill, the physician called to attend him is not asked whether or no he belongs to the same political party. So here, where party spirit and party rancour are always rife—and you are much freer in your expression of rancours than we are—I think that the doctor's political opinions are not questioned. Therefore may we not at once assume that a great deal that would be necessary in speaking to the people of another profession is almost unnecessary here.

“Now let us see what an International Council of Nurses would mean. It would mean the giving of a new interest to the nurses of every country, the interest of bringing others into the international organization. Everywhere organization is strength. You heard, yesterday morning, that legislation touches your own profession, therefore your profession cannot be indifferent to legislation; and if you cannot be indifferent to legislation, you cannot be indifferent to the public opinion which produces legislation and compels it. Therefore, the knowledge that an International Council of Nurses had been organized would have the same effect upon other countries that in 1888 the knowledge that a National Council of Women was organized in the States had on other countries, for in every country in which the International Council has been accepted, excepting my own, the National Council of Women has been brought into being by the International Council. Now, granted that we have already an International Council of Women, in forming an International Council of Nurses, see what help you already have! In ten countries now there are affiliated National Councils of Women. If you start this movement, every one of these affiliated National

Councils will get an impulse to bring the nurses of their own country into that National Council, and then, through them, all National Councils of Nurses into the International Council. But the countries where National Councils of Women are already formed are relatively independent of this need, because already in those countries it is the impulse of all organizations of women, of whatever profession, to bring these bodies into connection with their respective National Councils. So an additional impulse will be given by this movement to countries where National Councils have not yet been formed.

“I have no language to express the emotions stirred within me yesterday morning at the Meeting of Nurses, when Miss Watkins, from Cape Colony, told us of the organization of women in that country; and when you hear of the work of those registered trained nurses in Cape Colony, think what a work it would be for the nurses there to make a Union for themselves, and know that there was an International Council to affiliate to. But if it is possible to go beyond Cape Colony, in distance of idea and motive, in Asia, in Africa, in some parts of Europe, in South America, there are countries in which the first steps have not been formed towards National Council movements. To my mind it is in these countries that a Nurses' Council would be most potent. And while at this point I see the possibility of your best work, just there I see also the possibility of your first menace. We must look what menaces success, in order that we may prevent what otherwise we may never be able to cure. In the constitution of the International Council of Nurses, which will build up an organization of National Councils of Nurses in the different countries, there may be a feeling that they would come into the International Council of Women without relating themselves to the other work of the women in their respective countries. It is that point which I wish to make clear. A proposition has been brought forward in the International Council of Women, that organizations of women may come into that Council directly. Now, excluding anything from anything, is the last thought that could ever enter my mind; it is not to exclude that I speak, but to include in an orderly manner. Therefore, when this proposition comes up, I think an amendment should be made to secure the favour of all countries, that whenever a nominally international organization proves itself to be really international, by the existence of its membership in various countries, it may be welcomed into the International Council, but only on condition that the respective national groups enter the respective National Councils of their own countries. Therefore, in the suggestion made

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)