

by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick—for whose acute mind I have always felt admiration, and who has always seemed to me to be inspired by nobility of purpose—I see an opportunity here in England for you to bring about such an International Council of Nurses as will include nurses of all Schools of Practice, so to speak.

I refer to my own country—the Homœopaths, for instance—and the Allopathists on the other side. We are just as clever at organizing new Schools of Medicine in the United States as new Schools of Politics, and sometimes I have heard a fear expressed that the nurses themselves would be as separated by the different principles of medicine as the doctors have been separated. I know there is a strong and distinct movement to obtain the same recognition for all Schools of Medicine whose members have had a full education. This is as it should be. And among nurses, we must see to it that these distinctions do not come in. You must be loyal to your own hospitals. But with this loyal standing for your own place, you must recognise that nurses, under whatever roof they stand, be it palace or cottage, and following their profession under doctors of all Schools, are working for the same defined cause—that of ameliorating physical pain, so that fairness of perception may be possible; for we all feel that the sound mind can express itself best through the sound body, and that the sound body creates a state of mind that can think clearly and without passion. So I bespeak this suggestion for all bodies of nurses; and they will have such an attitude of sympathy to you of Great Britain that they will all feel themselves called to join first the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, and then this Union. I wish the different nuclei of nurses in the great cities of my country all to be brought together; I wish the nurses of the villages and remote places not to think themselves barred out by being in scattered hamlets, or beside mountain creeks, but to feel that they have united themselves with the common centre. So I bespeak for Great Britain such a union of purpose and method as will bring you under the banner of social peace, so that you may make your appeal to the nurses of every nation in the name of your own great profession at home. This movement can be started on this basis in Great Britain, and when the next Quinquennial Session arrives—wherever it may be held—there shall we find this most divine and most necessary of all professions amongst women with a united front, and its different national members incorporated in the different National Councils and with a seat in the International Council of Women of the World.”

The Chairman then put Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's resolution to the meeting, and it was carried by acclamation.

MISS ISLA STEWART, in closing the meeting, said how very much obliged to Mrs. Fenwick they were for her suggestion.

MRS BEDFORD FENWICK proposed a vote of thanks to the CHAIRMAN, which was seconded and carried unanimously.

WE have devoted the space at our disposal this week in connection with the Matrons' Council Conference to reporting the opening remarks of the Chairman, and the proposition for an International Council of Nurses. In future issues we hope to publish in full the very interesting papers and discussions presented. Miss Mollett's paper on the "Balance of Power in Hospital Administration," aroused a lively discussion, in which Dr. Toogood, Medical Superintendent of the Lewisham Infirmary, took part, as well as several members of the Matrons' Council. Miss Stewart's paper on the "Value of Discipline in Training" was much appreciated, and more than one member of the Council asked that it might be printed. Miss Stewart replied that it would appear in the NURSING RECORD. Miss Lucy Walker's paper on the "Work of Women on Hospital Boards" excited much interest, and amongst others who took part in the discussion was Miss Georgiana Hill, who is well known as a strong advocate of the appointment of women on hospital boards. A portion of a letter from Mrs. Hampton Robb—whose unavoidable absence was a matter of general regret—was read, expressing her surprise that there were here so few women on hospital boards, and saying that in the United States there were few hospitals whose Boards did not number some women among their members, one of the few which did not was the Johns Hopkins' Hospital, and she thought it was the worse for it. Mrs. Robb is herself a member of the Board of the Lakeside Hospital, and speaks besides with the authority of one who has held the position of Superintendent of one of the first Training Schools for Nurses in the United States. The Conference of the Matrons' Council, which is now an annual event, has proved both a popular and useful institution to the members. Last year many subjects of importance were brought before it, and this year its effects will be far-reaching. It is a most gratifying feature of these Conferences that so many of the country Matrons take long journeys at considerable expense in order to be present. No greater proof of the vitality of the Council could be given, for people do not spend money on what they do not value. British Hospital Matrons are learning that they, like their American colleagues, must co-operate if they are to be a force in their profession in the future.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)