

these nurses are not thus honoured by reason of being faithful members of a hardworking sisterhood, but only because they have joined the Pension Fund. If it is, then, so advantageous for nurses to belong to the Pension Fund, why should they be rewarded for so doing? Is not, rather, the whole arrangement meant to blind them to the fact that they are being kept in subjection and their earnings taken from them?

Many English nurses realize this, and I learned of cooperative societies among nurses in London much on the plan of our nurses' club houses at home, where the members rent a house, pay their executive a salary, and hold their own earnings.

The Matrons' Council stands for the organization and self-government of the graduate nurse and for her ascent into varied positions of influence and dignity. It wants to see her on training school and hospital boards, helping to direct the education of future generations of nurses. It is not insular and exclusive. It has honorary members representing eight countries and follows with interest the nursing movements of all lands. It is cosmopolitan and believes in affiliating nurses with other progressive women who are busy with practical reforms. At home it has one hundred full members, all matrons holding responsible positions. These things considered, the criticisms quoted above against the Matrons' Council seem to be of small account. Ideas outvalue size, and the principle of freedom is worth more than numbers.

It follows, then, as the conclusion of all this, that nurses in England are not organized into alumnae associations as ours are. Such unions seem to be quite unknown among them. They have the St. Barnabas Guild and some cooperative societies; but our republics in miniature, with officers elected by a general vote and a self-imposed government, they are not familiar with. But the matrons are much interested in this development, for they know that a class of workers cannot long survive as incoherent atoms. Either they must be ruled by others or learn to rule themselves.

There is in England a class of nurses who take no part or side with either one or the other of the two main divisions of the nursing world. Neutrals, going their own way, doing their work, holding with neither,—a steady-going and excellent set of women. Yet it seems to me it would be right for them to come out and declare themselves. More of them would be found on the progressive than on the conservative side, and why should they refuse the aid of their moral support to those ideas with which they are most in sympathy?

Nursing Echoes.

* * *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*



WE draw the attention of our readers to the splendid paper by Miss L. L. Dock, on "Nursing in England," which we publish in another column. We hope every Matron who takes this paper will read it carefully, and then pass it on to a colleague. Miss Dock has studied the question of nursing politics in this country from the point of view of an on-looker, and on-lookers proverbially see most of the game. The benefits of the international intercourse which we enjoyed at the Congress in June are early becoming patent. A greater mutual comprehension of the aims and difficulties of the nurses of different nations has already resulted, and will certainly become more apparent as time goes on.

* * *
THE point at issue which is at present agitating the nursing world in this country, and has been so ably described by Miss Dock, is really the same as that which has led to the present war in the Transvaal. Are the Uitlanders to possess reasonable powers of self-government and the right to adjudicate upon their own affairs? Experience tells us that, by the law of evolution the struggle can only end in one way, and we call upon the neutrals to come out boldly on the side of right. There are many who think with those who are working for nursing reforms, but who have so far refrained from public action.

* * *
THE British members of the Provisional Committee of the International Council of Nurses spent a laborious yet enjoyable day on Friday, when they met to discuss the outlines of the Constitution. They worked from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (with just a little rest for luncheon) and drew up suggestions and memoranda, which will, as soon as typed, be sent to the members of the Committee who were not able to be present, for annotation. Some months must elapse before these interesting documents can be returned to London. In the meantime, and before a general meeting can be called, much other nursing work presses.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)