

The League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses.



A Special General Meeting of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses was held in the Anatomical Theatre at the Hospital on Saturday last. The President, Miss Isla Stewart, said she would ask Miss Armitage (Sister Surgery) to take the Chair, as she herself wished to speak on the first question down upon the Agenda for discussion. Miss Armitage accordingly took the chair, and conducted the business most ably.

THE QUESTION OF AFFILIATION.

The discussion of the question of affiliation with other Leagues, which had been postponed from the Annual General Meeting in June, was necessitated by the following letter addressed to the Hon. Secretary of the League by Miss L. L. Dock, Hon. Secretary of the International Council of Nurses:—

MY DEAR MRS. WATES,—In view of the approaching Quinquennial Congress in Berlin in 1904, at which time the International Council of Nurses intends holding sessions for the business of furthering organisation among nurses, I write to ask if you have taken up the subject in your League, and, if it has not come up yet, to beg that you will bring it before the nurses at an early date.

You have now several Leagues in England, and if they were to affiliate and let their united strength be felt they would form a fine national body from which to send delegates to an International Congress. The example of their self-governing development and strength would also be a great help and stimulus to the more modern types of women on the Continent.

We realise every day at home what a support and defence our national organisation is, to which our various local groups send delegates. It has been an immense moral force, even aside from any direct achievement.

The constitution of the International Council, as you no doubt know, provides for the affiliation of national councils, and the officers will rejoice over the entrance of each new member. With best wishes for all your work,

Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

L. L. Dock, Secretary.

The question of affiliation with other Leagues had, Miss Stewart said, aroused a considerable amount of interest. It would, she thought, clear the ground if she explained what was meant by affiliation, and she would say at once that affiliation did *not* mean amalgamation. The Leagues would keep their distinctive individuality as at present, but they would touch at one point—they would have a central organisation. Thus they could take counsel together on important professional questions which might arise. Again, if a National Council of Nurses

were formed as the result of affiliation, British nurses would have a voice in the deliberations of the International Council of Nurses, by delegation from this National Council. The question of definite representation of the Leagues in proportion to membership would require to be considered. Undoubtedly the larger Leagues should have greater representation than the smaller ones, but not so great as to swamp their voice.

In affiliation they would have an antidote to parochialism, of which there was always a danger. Loyalty to one's own institution was good, but affiliation would help the League to understand the point of view of others. Thus St. Bartholomew's Hospital nurses, trained in a great hospital, would come into contact with the views of graduates of smaller and provincial schools, and learn to see with other people's eyes. She would therefore like to propose as a definite resolution that the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses express itself willing to affiliate with other Leagues.

Miss E. B. Kingsford seconded the resolution. Nothing but good could, she thought, come of its adoption.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said she would like to propose as an amendment that Associations of Nurses should be substituted for the word Leagues. In forming a National Association, such as Miss Stewart had described, the basis should be as comprehensive as possible, so that important Societies of Nurses—as, for instance, the nurses connected with the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute—should be eligible for admission. The Leagues which were already in existence could well form a Provisional Committee which could act as a nucleus of a National Council, and would be accepted as qualified for affiliation with the International Council of Nurses. It was, she thought, essential that Nursing Societies admitted to membership of this Council should be founded upon the basis of the graduate vote, and that the members should be associated together for definite purposes. To take the Nurses' Co-operation of London as a typical instance, the twenty members who were incorporated merely to carry on a commercial enterprise would not be eligible for membership in the National Council; but if the nurses working on the Co-operation formed themselves into a self-governing Society or League, such a Society would be eligible, as were the nurses of St. John's House, and also societies which could not assume the title of League, such as the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, the Matrons' Council, &c.

The amendment was seconded by Miss Margaret Breay.

Miss Stewart then said she thoroughly agreed with Mrs. Fenwick. There was no greater mistake in forming a society than to restrict its scope of

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)