

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 919.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1905.

Vol. XXXV.

Editorial.

WORKERS FOR THE COMMON WEAL.

The Matrons' Council inaugurated its winter session by an informal conference and social gathering, at which Miss Isla Stewart presented a paper on the Twentieth Century Matron. The attendance of members proved their appreciation of the opportunity afforded to them, an appreciation which became intensified as time went on, and those present realised what a fine paper their President had presented for their discussion. It will be read with deep interest by those members who unfortunately were prevented from attending, and by Miss Stewart's many friends amongst her colleagues in every colony of the Empire, as well as in the United States.

One of the most noticeable features at these gatherings of the Matrons' Council is the cordial and friendly feeling which exists among the members. It has now been in existence for eleven years, and throughout that period, whether in business session or in social gatherings, its meetings have been characterised by the utmost harmony.

Those to whom a courageous and professional policy appeal were attracted to the ranks of the Society from the outset, and it is a fact which is worthy of note, that any outside attack on the Matrons' Council or its work but binds the members more closely together, while an accession of new members to its ranks may be reckoned on with certainty.

One of the principal objects of the Matrons' Council—namely, "to bring about a uniform system of education, examination, certification, and State Registration for Nurses," was, eleven years ago, a forward policy, and for years the Council stood alone in advocating it. The Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, which has done so much of late years, is an off-shoot of the Council, and was founded when the work became too much for a Sub-Committee of the older Society. To these Societies it is due that the question has been

brought into the arena of practical politics, and it is more than likely that before another decade has passed, an Act for the State Registration of Nurses will be found on the Statute Book.

To those who ask what the Matrons' Council has done, it is sufficient to point to its work in connection with the Registration cause to justify its existence.

Its conferences on professional subjects have also proved of great interest and value.

The Matrons' Council was, so far as we are aware, the only body of nurses which sent up a resolution to the International Council of Women urging that the nursing of the sick should form one of the subjects for discussion at the International Congress of Women in London in 1899, which was subsequently arranged. It also organized a dinner to which foreign nurses present at the Congress were invited. At its Annual Conference that year we had the pleasure of proposing the formation of the International Council of Nurses, and its Hon. Officers, who were the British representatives on the Provisional Committee, were commissioned to frame the Draft Constitution of such a Council. The success and pleasure of the meetings of that Council at Buffalo, U.S.A., in 1901, and at Berlin in 1904, are now historic.

Deputations from the Matrons' Council have been received by the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary of State for War, and the Public Health Committee of the House of Commons. A Member of the Council also gave evidence on its behalf before the Departmental Committee appointed by the President of the Local Government Board to enquire into the Nursing of the Sick Poor in Workhouses. Indeed, its work in these and many other directions has been both varied and important.

The Council has always taken its stand upon a professional basis, and has its official organ in this journal. It is affiliated to the National Council of Women of this country, and is ably represented at its annual meetings. Its Hon. Members include some of the most honoured leaders of nursing throughout the world.

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