

## Presentation to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick.

On the last afternoon of the International Congress of Nurses in July, Sister Agnes Karll, President of the International Council of Nurses, announced that the representatives of the trained nurses of the world desired to present Mrs. Bedford Fenwick with a lasting token of their regard, to be selected by herself as a memorial of that wonderful Congress week, and the founding of the International Council of Nurses. The gift selected by Mrs. Fenwick was a piece of plate which took the form of a magnificent Chippendale salver made by William Peasdon in the year 1752, and which has been inscribed as follows:—

“Presented to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Founder of the International Council of Nurses, by the International Congress of Nurses. As a Token of Affectionate Regard and Appreciation of her Devoted Work for the Organisation of the Nursing Profession. London, July, 1909.”

The presentation was made by Miss Isla Stewart, at 431, Oxford Street, W., on October 22nd, when there was a crowded audience. Miss Stewart said:—

MRS. FENWICK AND LADIES:—The duty which now lies immediately before me is one which I shall perform with great pride and pleasure.

It is, as you all know, to present to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick this lovely salver from the International Congress of Nurses, as a token of their appreciation of her public work for nurses for the last twenty-five years, and especially for her most successful work in the organisation of the International Congress of Nurses which met in London in July of this year.

I am not going to give you a detailed history of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's work for nurses during those years; so I will only mention some of the most important points. The keynote of Mrs. Fenwick's work has been organisation. Thirty years ago nurses were scattered units, their work managed by laymen for the benefit and profit of others. Now they are associated in organised national bodies, with power and knowledge, and have made their power so well felt that even the Prime Minister of this country hears them on their own business. This has been Mrs. Fenwick's work, and those of us who are old enough to look back twenty-five years can only wonder at its success, for I believe no class of women have ever been so reluctant to be made independent as have nurses.

The societies which have originated in Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's great and agile brain have been many. First, the British Nurses' Association, which later became the Royal British Nurses' Association, and denied its foundation principles. When that society failed us, up arose the Matrons' Council, which for years stood alone as the advocate for the organisation of trained nursing, an offshoot of which is the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses. Then, most successful and greatest of all, the International Council of Nurses, the

natural development of which in this country called forth the National Council of Nurses. These, so to speak, are the mountain top evidence of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's work; but those who have had experience in the elevation of women's work will recognise how much digging and trenching lies out of sight in the valleys. Through all these years of struggle Mrs. Fenwick has not stood alone. She has been able to attract and to hold by unity of principle and purpose many who like herself were inspired with these high aims. To accomplish so much in so short a time required an exceptional personality, and her colleagues found this in Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. She is a woman with a single aim, which has been the emancipation and organisation of the nursing profession, and this aim she has kept always before her, and swerved for no obstacle. She has held an independent position, for twenty-two years ago she married Dr. Bedford Fenwick, who has loyally assisted her in every way. She is, as everyone knows, a keen, fearless fighter; she possesses a clear, clever brain, with a trained intelligence second to none that I have ever come in contact with; her interests are wide; she has a great knowledge of human nature, and is a faithful and devoted friend.

One can hardly wonder that such a leader has led her army victoriously, for though our goal, statutory registration, is not yet reached, we cannot doubt that we are on the high road to victory, and that the State, availing itself, as it does, of our skilled services in every department, will in the near future afford us the legal status which is our due.

It is not only in England that Mrs. Fenwick's work and power have been felt, but in every civilised country where trained nursing has become a factor in the national life. Witness the increase and growth of the International Council of Nurses, to which at our invitation our fellow nurses responded from twenty countries, in which there are now seven National Councils affiliated, with a membership of upwards of 25,000. Her influence has been world-wide.

This salver is intrinsically worthy of Mrs. Fenwick's acceptance, for it is what she herself would call a “genuine old piece,” and was made in 1752 by William Peasdon, a real artist in silver.

It is also worthy of her acceptance because it is offered to her with a real heartfelt devotion from the International Congress of Nurses. It is more than national devotion, or even that of an empire—it is a world-wide gift from nurses. It is an offering unique in the history of nurses, probably unique in the history of women.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, I have the honour to present to you this lovely salver from the International Congress of Nurses in token of their appreciation of your work for nurses, and especially in remembrance of the most successful International Congress of Nurses held in London in July.

Mrs. Fenwick, in her reply, said in part:

I am deeply sensible of all the generous kindness which has inspired the offering of this beautiful gift. It is the first testimonial for public service which I have ever accepted, and I accept it with the greatest pleasure and gratitude, coming, as it does,

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