

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

Mrs. Lancelot Andrews, proposing the toast of the International Council of Nurses, said: "I agree with Mrs. Baillie Reynolds in being proud of the honour of proposing a toast. I owe it, I think, to the honour I have in common with others here, of having been Mrs. Fenwick's probationer at St. Bartholomew's. Those who saw her leave the hospital in 1887, to fulfil woman's highest destiny, were dimly conscious that 20, Upper Wimpole Street would not hold her. In those early days I used to wonder if I worked very hard whether I should ever know as much as Mrs. Fenwick. I have long ceased to wonder. There is, however, one word in the English language of which she has no knowledge, that word is 'limitation.'

"Mrs. Spencer has reminded us of the foundation of the International Council of Nurses, so I need not enlarge upon that; but I think that the child Mrs. Fenwick has given to the world in this International Council has outstripped even her plan for it. To the trained nurses of the world sorrow, sickness, and death are stern realities with which they are trained to deal, and their advent in the home brings comfort, peace and rest. Through the larger influences of the International Council they are a factor making for the peace of the world.

"There are some whom we would gladly have with us to-night who have passed to the goodly company beyond, but they are with us in a wider spirit. With the toast of the International Council of Nurses I couple the name of its founder and all pioneers.

THE REPLY BY THE GUEST OF HONOUR.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, who, on rising to speak, received round after round of applause, said: "Madam Chairman, dear friend and charming hostess, and all others here to-night. When I accepted the most gracious invitation to be the guest to-night of certain members of the nursing profession, I accepted on the understanding that the gathering would be friendly and informal, and hardly realised that I should listen, and be invited to reply, to so many beautiful speeches.

"I offer you my very sincere thanks for the kind thought which prompted this Dinner, and the kind expressions of opinion which we have heard this evening. To repudiate all these would be to doubt the sincerity of my very best friends, and to fail in gratitude to those concomitant forces of which we know so little, which have combined in the past to bestow upon me gifts for which I am sincerely grateful. You will not, therefore, think me lacking in modesty if I accept your kind words in the spirit in which they are offered. Especially am I grateful to the powers which gave me the physical vitality which I have enjoyed, and have been able to place at the disposal of my fellow-creatures. I am grateful to have been able to live the strenuous life, to have possessed the discrimination enabling

me to estimate the true values of life, to cast aside the baubles which count for nothing, and to realise that 'life is divine when duty is a joy.'

"I have to thank Mrs. Spencer for the kind and gracious way in which she has placed my public work before you; Miss Heather-Bigg, Mlle. Danviray, Miss Musson, Mrs. Baillie Reynolds and Mrs. Andrews for the happy way in which they have spoken to the various toasts. My public work for the nursing profession has been my life, and many persons might well envy me my opportunities. The true nurse realises that the care of the sick is the happiest vocation in life, as it gives scope both to her intelligence and her emotions.

"The movement for the State registration of trained nurses, referred to by Miss Musson, and for which the nursing profession has been pleading for twenty-five years, is one of far-reaching significance. It is not merely the placing of names and qualifications in a book, but the recognition by State authority, of the invaluable work of the trained nurse for the community in connection with the prevention of disease, and the maintenance of the standard of national health.

"Your work is indispensable to the stability of the State, therefore it is the duty of the State to recognise its value and to define a progressive standard for your professional education, and to protect your economic position as skilled workers. There is ample evidence before us that depreciation and injury to the profession of nursing, and to the status of the trained nurse, are in active operation, owing to such lack of protection, in your exclusion from direct representation under the Insurance Act, and by the British Red Cross Committee from the units despatched to care for the sick and wounded in the Near East.

"I exceedingly appreciate the toast by Mrs. Baillie Reynolds, of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING. I consider that an independent professional organ in the Press is the greatest asset which any profession can possess. The day has passed when nursing can be considered either as an expression of religious feeling or as degraded drudgery. Skilled nursing has now taken its place as a great economic factor in the social welfare of the people, and this being so its economic standard must be carefully protected. In these hustling days the only way in which corporate opinion can be expressed is through the Press. It is therefore urgently necessary that each class shall have this power of expression uninfluenced by bribery and corruption, and as business women we can no longer delude ourselves that keen financiers run professional organs for our benefit irrespective of profit. Quite the reverse. To prevent the true interests of the workers being sacrificed and their work being exploited, it has been proved by nurses all over the world that they must possess an official organ prepared to support principle as opposed to expediency, and it is by the possession of such power alone that we can maintain that liberty

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