

INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION TO THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

By MARGARET BREAY, REGISTERED NURSE

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK.

When we come to consider the claims of candidates for election to the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, the name that will come first in everyone's thoughts must be that of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, for, without this forceful friend, indomitable worker, and brilliant organiser, the nurses of the United Kingdom would have no Nursing Acts, and it is a matter of *noblesse oblige* that, whoever is or is not returned to the Council in the coming election, Mrs. Fenwick is placed there with all honour. To do otherwise would write down the electors as ingrates indeed.

I may, perhaps, be permitted to add a personal note, and to say after more than a quarter of a century's close association with her and her work, the dominating factor in a life of many facets has been the aim which she has constantly pursued, and from which she has never swerved, of placing Nursing Education on a uniform and satisfactory basis, and of securing for duly qualified nurses a recognised status conferred by Act of Parliament.

In 1887 she initiated the movement for the organisation of trained nursing, and she drafted the first Bill for the Registration of Nurses, which was introduced into the House of Commons in 1904, and was passed by the House of Lords in 1908, and saw her work crowned with success when the Royal Assent was given to the Nurses' Registration Acts on December 23rd, 1919; that was a supreme moment which no one can ever take from her. During the term of office of the present Council she has worked with infinite care to ensure that the Rules framed under the authority of the Council shall be just and wise: and she contended for the right of the existing and intermediate nurses to have their certificates of training recorded on the State Register, when, incredible as it may seem, a nurse-member of the Council proposed that they should be deprived of this right.

In order to acquaint herself with the educational

and economic conditions of nurses she has visited not only many European countries but also the United States of America, and Canada, and investigated those conditions. The fact that she is willing to stand for another term of office is proof of her public spirit in the interests of Nurses.

Mrs. Fenwick's nursing career dates from the time when as a girl in her 'teens she entered the Children's Hospital, Nottingham, for training as a Paying Probationer, passing on, again as a Paying Probationer, for General Training to the Royal Infirmary, Manchester; for nearly two years she was Sister of wards containing fifty-three beds at the London Hospital, and in 1881

was appointed Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London. She is Founder and Hon. President of the International Council of Nurses, President of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland; Hon. Member of the Irish Matrons' Association, and the National Association of Trained Nurses of India; was for many years President of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and is Hon. Nurse Secretary of the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses.

She started the movement for the organisation of Nurses by the State in this and all other countries, and is the only Foreign Member of the American National League of Nursing Education, and of the American Nurses' Association.

She initiated the Royal British Nurses' Association, and is named in the Incorporation Clause of its Royal Charter.

She was President of the British Nursing Section, British Royal Commission, Chicago Exhibition

She holds the Distinguished Order of the Greek Red Cross for active service in Greece as Lady Superintendent of the Nursing Department of the National Fund for the Greek wounded, and also the Medal of the Reconnaissance Francaise for her services to the French War Office as Hon. Superintendent of the French Flag Nursing Corps.



MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK,
formerly Matron and Superintendent of Nursing,
St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C.

Promoter of the Movement for the Organization of Trained Nursing by the State, 1887-1922; Drafted the First Bill for the State Registration of Nurses, introduced into the House of Commons 1904, which passed the House of Lords, 1908; Hon. Nurse Secretary of the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses.

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