

**NURSES OF NOTE.**

**MAKERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.**

It is now a quarter of a century since the International Council of Nurses was founded on the proposition of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick at the Second Annual Conference of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, and since that time another generation of nurses has grown up, many of whom know little or nothing of the history of its foundation.

We, therefore, reprint from the *NURSING RECORD AND HOSPITAL WORLD* (now *THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING*), of July 8th, 1899, the report of the Matrons' Council Conference, held on July 1st, so far as it relates to the foundation of the International Council of Nurses, and next month the report of the meeting of the Provisional Committee held on the following day by invitation of Miss Isla Stewart, at the Matron's House, St. Bartholomew's Hospital:—

**The Matrons' Council Conference, 1899.**

The Second Annual Conference convened by the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland was held on Saturday, July 1st, at 20, Hanover Square. Miss Isla Stewart, Chairman of the Council, presided, and there was a good attendance, some 200 nurses being present, including a considerable number of country members and many of the foreign nurses present at the International Congress. There were present on the platform Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Councillor, Miss Huxley, Lady Superintendent of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin, Miss Gertrude Knight, Matron of the General Hospital, Nottingham, and Miss Mollett, Matron of the Royal South Hants Infirmary, Southampton, the three Vice-Chairmen of the Council.

Before beginning the ordinary business meeting, Miss STEWART said that Mrs. Bedford Fenwick wished to move a resolution. Those who were present at the meeting of the nursing section, on the previous day at the Westminster Town Hall, were much gratified by the Countess of Aberdeen reading a very kind letter from Miss Florence Nightingale, and Mrs. Fenwick felt that it would be a graceful act on the part of the Matrons' Council to convey to Miss Nightingale their appreciation of her action.

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK moved:—

"That the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, assembled in Annual Conference, beg to convey to Miss Florence Nightingale their warm appreciation of her kind and inspiring letter addressed to the nurses present at the International Congress of Women, and to assure her that it is their earnest desire to uphold the high standard which she has placed before the Nursing Profession."

MISS HUXLEY (Dublin) seconded the motion, which was carried with acclamation.

MISS STEWART then delivered her Presidential Address from the chair, after which she invited Mrs. Bedford Fenwick to make her proposal to the Council.



**THE LATE MISS ISLA STEWART,**  
First President of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland.  
A Foundation Member of the International Council of Nurses.

**The International Council of Nurses.**

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK spoke on "The International Idea," but made her remarks very brief, as Mrs. May Wright Sewall had come to speak on this subject. She was entirely in sympathy with Mrs. Sewall, but she was a practical person and wanted to bring down this International Idea to the practical needs of nurses, and to propose that it should be utilised in connection with the nursing profession. She spoke as follows:—

"I desire to bring before this meeting a question which I believe to be of international interest and importance, and I am happy in knowing that it will be supported by a speaker whose eloquence has few equals, and, perhaps, no superiors. I will speak only from the point of view of a trained nurse; Mrs. May Wright Sewall will with greater force discuss the question from the wider point of view of its public usefulness. The nursing profession, above all things at present, requires organisation; nurses, above all other things at present, require to be united. The value of their work to the sick is acknowledged at the present day by the Government of this and of all other civilised countries, but it depends upon nurses individually and collectively to make their work of the utmost possible usefulness to the sick, and this can only be accomplished if their education is based on such broad lines that the term "a trained nurse" shall be equivalent to that of a person who has received such an efficient training and has proved to be also so trustworthy that the responsible duties which she must undertake, may be performed to the utmost benefit of those entrusted to her charge. To secure these results two things are essential; that there should be re-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)