

So, with every confidence, Dr. Fenwick proposed "Success to the British College of Nurses," and asked those present to drink that toast with the determination that each one would do all in her power to forward that success, but ever remembering that " 'Tis not in mortals to command success, then we'll do more—deserve it."

MRS. KEYNES, J.P., SUPPORTS THE TOAST.

Mrs. Keynes, J.P., President of the National Council of Women of Great Britain, said it was an honour to support this toast. The British College of Nurses was, through the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, affiliated to the National Council of Women—one of the youngest but most welcome of their societies. She had great admiration for the work of the nursing profession and hoped that one of the fruits of the work of the College would be to induce more of the right type of women to enter into nursing. At present it was difficult, but they were trying to get the conditions improved to attract the younger women to take up nursing, for they were badly needed. The National Council of Women of Great Britain had a wide outlook, and would do anything they could to help, and would always be glad to take up subjects in which the College was interested.

THE GUESTS.

Mrs. Lancelot Andrews, F.B.C.N., said she had just recently returned from a holiday to find that the President, with her uncanny powers of intuition, had discerned this and laid upon her the duty, and she might add the honour, of proposing the health of the guests. That company was most distinguished and she felt quite unable to do justice to the toast, but she was sure she was expressing the sentiments of all present in their appreciation of the honour paid to the College by their presence, and she might perhaps especially mention the drama, because, every nurse when off duty, if it was in any way possible, made a bee line for the theatre.

THE RESPONSE.

Mr. Lewis Casson, in response to the toast, thanked the College in the name of the guests for their hospitality, and the nurses of London for the magnificent way in which they supported the theatre. They were an ideal audience, and he put it down to the fact that they were workers, and, possibly, because nurses could carry out directly in their work what the theatre was trying to teach the world—sympathy with other human beings.

Actors tried to find out the point of view of other people, and to make this clear to the audiences before whom they played. The work of the nurse was to dramatise herself, and to see the point of view of her various patients—a difficult and trying task, but the essence which was at the root of her work.

Mr. Casson concluded by referring to Dr. McEwen's question, why was it that every man who went into a nursing home fell in love with his nurse? He did not attempt to solve the conundrum, but remarked "No nurse ever falls in love with us."

THE CHAIR.

Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, J.P., D.Sc., Ph.D., F.L.S., Vice-President of the International Council of Women, proposing the toast of "The Chair" said that Mrs. Bedford Fenwick was one of the great women of this day and generation, an intrepid and fearless leader, a pioneer whose life's work had culminated in securing a Magna Carta for nurses, and the stabilisation of the nursing profession. It was not necessary for her to repeat what had been so admirably told of the inchoate condition of Nursing at the time when Mrs. Bedford Fenwick faced the task before her. It had taken her thirty-two years to accomplish it, during which she, (the speaker) had seen her working strenuously for Nurses. The National Council of Women had had to work for the organisation of the Nursing Profession.

There was no refusing Mrs. Fenwick. It was those thirty-two years of labour which had won the battle.

But it required the War to shake up the mentality of men, and of the Government, to bring them to the point of giving to women the power to utilise their gifts.

Surely, said the speaker, no nation that went through the Great War would ever be able to repay not only the men, but also the nurses who experienced that long purgatory, and bore themselves so nobly in alleviating the misery and pain of those who were martyred for our sakes. No country could forget what the nurses had done, and through their State Registration they now had new opportunities.

During the last few years there had been a pessimistic note in art, drama, and music, but, said Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, I know what has been going on in science, and in the great women's movements, and I assure every one of you that there is nothing but progress in the times in which I have had my part to play.

I would like to tell nurses to take courage and to realise that if they are to do their duty by the leader who has shown the way, they must never be daunted by the drawing back of the waves, but must carry forward that improvement in their position which has been won for them. They must be willing to work, individually and collectively, in order to maintain the high honour of the great profession now in their care.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick also possessed what to her was most precious, the high international sense, which not all British women had.

She referred to the presence of Mrs. Fenwick at the "birth of the International Council of Women" in America in 1893, and to the message with which she was entrusted by Mrs. May Wright Sewall, President of the International Council of Women to Mrs. Eva MacLaren to organize a National Council of Women in Great Britain, a mission successfully fulfilled. "I have," said Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, "the greatest pleasure in asking you to accept this toast to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, your honoured friend and leader."

The toast was received with loud and prolonged applause.

THANKS FROM THE CHAIR.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, in replying, said she had hoped to arrange the programme without a speech from the Chair. She thanked Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, a friend for whose scientific career, and international spirit she had the warmest admiration, for her too kind reference to her own work, and she thanked all the eminent persons who had accepted the hospitality of the British College of Nurses for their presence and speeches, which had brought it into touch with spheres of brilliant accomplishment.

"I may confess," said Mrs. Fenwick, "that had I not been a nurse I should have loved to have been an actress, and, indeed, I may add, I have done a little play acting in my time though not from behind the footlights. As a keen lover of the Drama I have during the past half century seen the finest acting in the world, having once in youth, entranced by genius, watched Henry Irving in 'Hamlet' for five successive nights!

"Though we nurses," continued Mrs. Fenwick, "may have little artistic expression—many of us have been endowed with a keen sense of appreciation of Art, Science and Literature. Fine painting, splendid Sculpture or Architecture, Music, the Drama and Literature, what solace for a weary spirit. I feel sure those of you who are gifted with the power to practise the fine arts, will realise why those of us who come into such intimate touch with human tragedy, turn to you for recreation and relief.

"We are indeed," concluded Mrs. Fenwick, "greatly honoured by your presence here to-night, and we thank you for your charming company."

A very happy and successful evening closed with the National Anthem.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)