

NURSES' ORGANISATIONS.

COUNTY AND COUNTY BOROUGH HOSPITAL MATRONS' ASSOCIATION.

We attended a most interesting and enjoyable Dinner on Saturday, November 1st, given by the County and County Borough Hospital Matrons' Association, in the Empire Salon, at the Holborn Restaurant. The guests were received by the President, Miss Letitia S. Clark, M.B.E., R.R.C., Matron of the Whipps Cross Hospital, Leytonstone, together with the Treasurer Miss Copeman, and Miss Joan Inglis, the Hon. Secretary. There was a large attendance of Members and their friends, all very bright and gay evidently intent on a most enjoyable time.

Amongst the noted guests were Dr. William Brander, of the London County Council, and at the high table sat Dame Maud McCarthy, R.R.C., Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President, National Council of Nurses of Great Britain; Miss Musson, C.B.E., R.R.C., Chairman, General Nursing Council for England and Wales; Miss A. Lloyd-Still, C.B.E., R.R.C.; Miss Sparshott, C.B.E., R.R.C., President, College of Nursing; Miss Eleanor Barton, R.R.C., and Miss D. E. Bannon, Matron-in-Chief, London County Council Nursing Service. An excellent dinner was served, after which the President proposed the health of His Majesty the King, which was drunk with enthusiasm, and between toasts, the Concert Programme included selections by the Eton Glee Singers, Messrs Albert Watson, Harry Carver, Fred Naylor and William Barrand, whose exquisite singing received an enthusiastic encore every time.

In proposing the Toast "The County and County Borough Hospital Matrons' Association" the President alluded to its foundation some twenty years ago by Miss Eleanor Barton, then Matron of the Chelsea Infirmary, as the Poor Law Infirmary Matrons' Association, which had now adopted its new title in consequence of reorganisation under the 1929 Local Government Act. The purpose of the Association, co-operation for professional and social purposes, was receiving extended support and proving its usefulness. The Toast was received with applause.

The Nursing Profession.

Miss Musson proposed the Toast of the Nursing Profession in felicitous terms, and in doing so said she did not propose to speak about the General Nursing Council—as some of them might expect her to—she knew a good motto for after-dinner speakers:

"Never say nuthin' without you're compelled tu,
An' then don't say nothin' that you can be held tu."

Neither would she attempt to answer a conundrum which was recently propounded to her: "Where do all the Registered Nurses go to?"

This conundrum had set her off thinking, where had all her own Nurses gone to? There seemed to be no quarter of the habitable globe to which Nurses had not found the way; in the snowy arctic regions, in the heat of the tropics, in the farthest East as in the farthest West, Nurses were to be found.

Their various modes of conveyance alone gave some idea of their widespread activities: not only the prosaic train and steamer, but river boats of all kinds, canoes and rowing boats, horseback, camelback and elephant's howdah, aeroplanes, tongas, dhoolis, palanquins, rickshaws, ox wagon and mule cart, dog-sleigh and snow shoes, not to mention the homely 'bus or tramcar, the motor-bike, push-bike and the often overworked Shanks' pony.

There were now so many branches of Nursing that the Profession had something to offer to women of very varied tastes and dispositions, when their training was completed.

Some work was most attractive to the domesticated woman, some to the one imbued with the missionary spirit, other branches to those who were scientifically minded, others to those of adventurous disposition.

It was a Profession of great traditions and, we all believed, a great future. No Nurse had lived through more interesting times, nor seen greater changes, than those who were present. To take only two instances, the passing of Nurses' Registration Acts, not only in this but in many other countries, and the formation of National and International Organisations. It was a great pleasure that the great pioneer in both these movements was present, in the person of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick.

Forty years ago such a gathering as this would not have been possible, as Matrons living within a few miles of each other were then often unacquainted, now we have not only made acquaintance but many warm friendships with our colleagues both at home and abroad.

With those overseas, we are connected through our great International Council of Nurses and also through the visits, arranged by the League of Red Cross Societies, of many nurses who are pioneers in their own countries and who come here to study our work and methods. It seemed to her that the Nurses of all Nations, working more and more closely together, were weaving a web of service over all the world. She thought of a scene in the performance of "Hiawatha," which most of them, no doubt, had seen at the Albert Hall, when, at the funeral of Minnehaha, many hands took the folds of her white robe and spread it wide around her—a symbol of the mantle of snow which covers the tired Earth and rests and invigorates it.

Another thought was, to her mind, beautifully expressed by a preacher in Birmingham on the previous Sunday, which was "Hospital Sunday" in Birmingham. She would like to be permitted to hand it on. The preacher (a layman) said it seemed to him "that the Hospital was, as it were, the spreading of the garment of Christ, that the sick and suffering might touch it and be healed." Was not that the ideal for the Nursing Profession, the spreading of a garment of rest and healing over the face of the Earth? Miss Musson further said that she was not at all pessimistic about the future, the much discussed "girl of to-day" is not very different from the girl of yesterday, she had perhaps lost some of the pleasing attributes of the latter but she had acquired some others in their place. She is perhaps more difficult to handle but she is usually straightforward and of friendly intent. We might exercise the three great virtues in regard to our beloved profession:—
Love for the great traditions and the great leaders of the past.

Hope for the success of our present day work, † "the greatest architect and the one most needed is Hope."

Faith in the future development of the Profession and in the ability to carry on of those who shall come after us.

The Guests.

Miss Dodds, R.R.C., proposed "The Guests" and welcomed them graciously, and Miss Sparshott responded in gay after-dinner style. Although she informed the company it was only the second public speech she had made, her friends will now know what social duty to allot to her at future functions.

It was close on eleven before the National Anthem was given very heartily by the loyal company present, and thanks and good-nights expressed.

We congratulate the Association on the great success of the function, remembering as we do its inception, it is most encouraging to note its growth and extending power. What a change is here! It is indeed a matter for congratulation.

* Lowell—Bigelow Papers.

† Henry Ward Beecher.

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