

The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland.

To the Council of BEDFORD COLLEGE for WOMEN

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bedford College has always been in the forefront in advancing the educational interests of women, and it is therefore with confidence that, as President of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, and on its behalf, I am writing to place before you a point of much educational importance to the nursing profession, assured of a sympathetic hearing, and hopeful of practical assistance.

The Matrons' Council on its foundation in 1894 adopted as one of its objects:-

"To bring about a uniform system of education....for nurses  
"in British Hospitals."

The organisation of the profession of nursing is a growth of the last half century, and much remains to be effected before an efficient curriculum of nursing education can be considered in any sense complete.

Excellent instruction in the practical details of nursing work is now afforded by many nurse training schools, but it is becoming increasingly apparent to experienced superintendents that, following upon the three years' practical work, a further course of instruction is necessary to qualify nurses, who show evidence of executive ability for the higher posts in the nursing world. Our hospitals are, in fact, schools of nursing, and the superintendents of Training Schools and Sisters of Wards, need not only to be able to perform nursing duties skilfully themselves, but to have the power of imparting knowledge to others, and to be conversant with the best methods of teaching, if the highest results are to be obtained.

Further, as these officers are brought into contact with a great diversity of persons and interests in the course of their professional work it is important that those holding superior positions should have been brought into touch with wide interests and public questions.

The Matrons' Council is supported in this view by the analogous Society in the United States, the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools for Nurses and, at the request of this Society, Teachers' College, which is in connection with the Columbia University New York, instituted in 1899 a class in Hospital Economics for students having the necessary qualifications for teachers in training schools, concerning which, together with other supplementary matter, detailed information is enclosed. The Chairman of this Course in Hospital Economics is Miss Maud Runfield, a graduate of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, and a member of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland.

It appears to the Matrons' Council that Bedford College is peculiarly well qualified to organise such a Course in this country, and indeed, that many of the subjects which it would be advisable for its students to take up are already taught in the College, such as bacteriology, chemistry, hygiene, physics, physiology, and professional training in teaching.

In support of this need for such a Course for future Superintendents of Training Schools it is only necessary to point out that so far no inclusive Course has been established in this country which future superintendents can pass through, and by means of which the professional standard for Superintendents can be defined and established, thus affording Committees of Training Schools a guarantee that those nurses who have passed through the Course have received instruction in the special duties which as Superintendents of Training Schools they will be called upon to discharge.

May I therefore ask the Council of Bedford College to take into consideration the establishment of such a Course, for the further-

ance of the better education of nurses, and, in consequence, of the better nursing of the sick.

In conclusion I desire to express the willingness of the Matrons' Council to afford any assistance in its power to the Council of Bedford College on any points of professional discipline, and practical nursing work which may arise in connection with the organization of the Course.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Isla Stewart.

President of the Matrons' Council  
of Great Britain and Ireland.  
Matron and Superintendent of Nursing  
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Matron's House,

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