

important to nurses throughout the world. These meetings will take place in the mornings and afternoons; whilst in the evenings, many social gatherings and festivities are being arranged for the Council, in which those attending the Nursing Congress will naturally take their share.

There are two matters which deserve immediate notice; the first being that this Congress will be for ever memorable and important in the annals of Nursing, inasmuch as it will be the first occasion upon which it takes its place as a leading and recognised profession open to, and occupied by, women of all nations; the first occasion on which the views of Nurses from many different countries will be influentially expressed in council. It is therefore an opportunity which should be of incalculable value in enabling the opinions of all interested in Nursing to be formulated and brought before the public. Definite resolutions concerning the methods of education, certification, and State control, of nurses will doubtless be brought before this Congress, and the deliberate judgment which may be expressed upon these matters will not only educate public opinion upon the questions at issue, but will also establish the basis upon which improvements may be made in the future.

At this moment, it only remains for us to bring these facts to the knowledge of hospital Matrons throughout this country and the British Colonies; and to ask them, as the leaders of their profession, to avail themselves of this great opportunity for securing the advancement and welfare of their calling. For more than ten years, we have been working towards this end. The organization of the Nursing profession was commenced in 1887. The first voluntary Register of trained nurses was published in 1891. The Royal Charter was granted to the nursing profession in 1893. The first Nursing Exhibition was held in 1896. The first Matrons' Conference in this country was held in 1898; and now nurses from all parts of the world will be able to meet and take international council together next June. It only requires the united interest and assistance of the leaders of the profession in this country in the movement which has been so auspiciously commenced, in order to secure that co-operation which would be of incalculable value in bringing about organization and reforms of the highest benefit to the public and the whole body of Nurses.

Annotations.

A QUESTION OF DISCIPLINE.

WE promised last week, in reply to a request from a well-known Matron of a country hospital, to give our views as to the relative positions which should be occupied by the Matron and the house-surgeon in these institutions. First of all, and unquestionably, the Matron must be the supreme head of the entire female staff. Miss Nightingale has laid it down that the Matron should be the best nurse in the building, and as such she is naturally the superintendent of nursing, as well as of the domestic department. Of the Matron's right, and, indeed, duty, to visit the wards at any hour of the twenty-four which seems good to her there can be no question, only so can she fulfil her obligation as Superintendent of Nurses, and full authority of action in this matter should be given her in writing by the Committee.

The entertainment of young house-surgeons to tea, and even late at night, by Sisters and Charge Nurses in their sitting-rooms—which are frequently also their bed-rooms—is in our opinion a most undesirable practice. We can only say that in polite society the conduct of girls who received young men in this way would be rightly liable to very grave censure, and in the past, the license entailed by this habit has certainly been the cause of more hospital scandals than it is necessary to enumerate.

Further, house-surgeons and physicians are usually young men of not very extensive experience of life from a social and educational standpoint. It is, for instance, quite the exception that they should have travelled, or have been to a University. To place a young and inexperienced man in a position of authority over women is quite indefensible. Every committee should arrange a charge of duties, for both the Matron and the Medical Officer, and the Matron should be made responsible for personal discipline of the female staff, and the ward management. The medical and surgical treatment of the sick should, of course, be placed in charge of the Resident Medical Officer, subject to the direction of the Honorary Visiting Officer or Officers; but that the House Surgeon should assume any responsibility for the domestic management, or for the personal control of the Matron, or any of the female officials, must inevitably lead to lack of

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