

The International Nursing Congress.

It has been arranged that the first Paper to be presented in the Nursing Session of the International Congress will be read by Mrs. Neill, Assistant Inspector of Hospitals and Asylums in New Zealand, a lady who has had a long and distinguished nursing career, and acted as the first factory-inspector in Australasia, before being appointed to her present important post under Government. Mrs. Neill will read the first Paper on "The Professional Training and Status of Nurses," which will comprehend:—

- (a) Standard of General Education and Age of Probationers.
- (b) Preliminary Professional Training.
- (c) Science and Ethics and Etiquette.
- (d) Educational Curriculum in Hospital.
- (e) Standard and Form of Examination.
- (f) Certification.
- (g) Registration.

In the Open Discussion which will follow on this important Paper, we British nurses will have an opportunity of expressing our views on these professional points, and we hope that many present will make a point of speaking and giving a definite expression to the views which they have formed, after personal experience, on the subjects of nursing education, and the importance of a legally defined status for members of the nursing profession.

It is by means of open discussion on professional affairs that public opinion can be educated; and the more we study the nursing question the more convinced we become, that there is nothing to be hoped from the initiative of Hospital Committees, or Medical Bodies, in support of just legislation for nurses; the bitter opposition with which all attempts to procure reforms by the nurses themselves have been met during the past decade amply justifies this view. So that our only hope is in proving to the community that their interests are bound up with those of the trained nurse, that at present there is no recognised standard of efficiency, and, in consequence, the public are at the mercy of a disorganized and, in many instances, a most inefficient body of so-called trained nurses.

MUCH of this opposition arises from economic reasons. The better education of the nurse means increased expenditure by Hospital Committees, and increases the nurse's commercial value, so that the middleman—or rather, "middlewoman"—who farms out nurses from a central nursing

institution would be unable to sweat the worker in the future, as she has done and is still doing; for instance, within the last month, advertisements have appeared in the press as follows:—

"WANTED, NURSES with not less than one year's recent hospital general training, for private nursing home. Indoor uniform and salary. Apply, any morning between Eleven and One, to Miss WALKER, 27, Brompton Square, London, S.W."

"NURSING HOSTEL, 33, Beaumont Street, W.—An ASSISTANT NURSE WANTED, with at least one year's training. Salary £20. Apply, LADY SUPERINTENDENT."

Now when it is realised that both Miss Walker, and Miss Meyrick, of 33, Beaumont Street, were specially nominated by Mr. Fardon, of Middlesex Hospital, and Medical Hon. Secretary of the Royal British Nurses' Association, to seats on its Executive Committee, after he had succeeded in altering the bye-laws and removing the founders and leading Matrons from their seats on this Committee, and when it is also realised that membership of the R.B.N.A. is only open to nurses of three years' hospital training, the danger to the public of the attempt of Mr. Fardon and his nominees to depreciate the professional status of nurses, by permitting women who violate the first principles of the Association to *sit on the Executive Committee*, proves our contention that the public must arouse themselves in their own interests if half-trained and incapable women are not to be palmed off upon them in times of sickness and distress.

THE second Paper to be presented at the Congress will be read by Mrs. Quintard, the esteemed Superintendent of Nurses at St. Luke's Hospital, New York, on "Naval and Military Nursing"; and when the reorganisation of the nursing department in connection with our Army is so much in evidence—thanks to Captain Norton, M.P., in the House, and in the press—this Paper should prove of immense interest to the profession and the public. It may not be generally realised that there exists an unwritten, but very *distinctly spoken* rule forbidding our Army Nursing Sisters to speak in public, or give any information, concerning the details of the Army Nursing Service. That the more able Sisters are strongly in favour of various necessary reforms is an open secret; but any hope of an expression of opinion from them at the Congress is hopeless under existing "unwritten laws." Mrs. Quintard has formed her views after working in charge of one of the largest and most important camps for the wounded in the States during the late war, and we shall, doubtless, have some eminently practical suggestions from her. It is to be hoped that those responsible for our Army

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