

**Nursing Echoes.**

**\*\* All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.**



Our readers will be interested in the portraits which we present this week of Miss Isabel McIsaac, and Miss Annie Damer, two ladies who will take such an active part in the forthcoming International Nurses' Congress at Buffalo.

Miss McIsaac has been selected to fill the important position of President of the Congress, and is the Superintendent of the Illinois Training School for Nurses at Chicago, which is attached to the beautiful Cook County and Presbyterian Hospitals of that city, and together contain upwards of one thousand beds.

Miss McIsaac is a graduate of Bellevue Hospital, New York, is a past President of the Society of Superintendents, and is held in the highest esteem throughout the American nursing world.

Miss Annie Damer is also a graduate of Bellevue Hospital, and as President of the Buffalo Nurses' Association, and past President of the Ladies' Hospital Association of the Buffalo General Hospital, has been, unanimously selected as Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements of the International Nurses' Congress. Miss Damer is, moreover, a member of the Board of Women Managers of the Pan-American Exposition, and a lady of recognised ability in nursing circles in the States. It is delightful to think that, in a few weeks, we shall have the pleasure of meeting these able women, and their charming colleagues, at our own Congress.

At the Conference of the Women's Liberal Federation, to be held at Birmingham on May 8th, 9th and 10th, the following resolution will be proposed by Mrs. Charles McLaren:—"That this Council desires to direct the attention of hospital and infirmary authorities to the injury sustained by nurses through the long hours of work, and urges that no nurse should be on duty for periods exceeding eight hours, and that the regulations respecting night duty and hours of sleep and recreation for nurses be re-considered."

It is, we believe, the first time this progressive

body of women have touched the question of the nursing profession, and we welcome the proposal to discuss the hours of nurses' work as a good sign. And if we, with long years of experience, know that such practical details present extraordinary difficulties in practice, and that no effective reorganisation of practical nursing can take place before the basis of the professional status of nurses has been defined, still we realise that it is only by tackling one detail of hospital management, as it affects nurses, that we can hope to see lay women acquaint themselves with the whole case for nursing reform. Sleep, food, flat feet (the obvious result of prolonged standing), are practical details the lay mind can grasp and discuss; but it is only in consultation with the expert nurse and Matron who know every side of the question, that it is possible to arrive at just conclusions.

At present, hospital nurses are merely the paid employées of the governors of these institutions. Their primary duty is to nurse the sick: that is what they are in the institution for; and their own interest, their professional education, etc., are secondary considerations. The governors of a hospital, in their anxiety to provide expert care for the patients, have also provided a limited measure of theoretical instruction for their nurses; and in return for board, lodging, a fair salary, and practical experience in nursing the sick, expect a good day's work. That is the present condition in a nut shell; and, moreover, if the less robust class of women fail to give this equivalent, there are plenty of strong, less delicately nurtured women prepared to step into their shoes and "do the nursing."

On the other hand, educated Matrons and nurses quite realise that if nursing is ever to advance from a somewhat exacting form of domestic service, the greatly increased financial expenditure cannot be borne by the charitable, and it must in part be met by the would-be professional nurses themselves. The charitable cannot be expected to provide up-to-date colleges of nursing wherein the pupils will reside and study, to pay reasonable fees to expert medical and nursing teachers, to greatly increase the number of pupils and trained nurses, so that each shall be on duty but eight hours, or, indeed, in a word, to pay for the professional education of another man's daughter. And it is only by the nurse probationer evolving into the nurse pupil, and, in part, paying the increased expenses which such a change involves, that shorter hours and less work can be provided.

Thus we come back to the crux of the whole question. Is nursing to remain, as at present,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)