

The Paris Conference.

As there appears to be some misapprehension concerning the organisation of the interim Nursing Conference in Paris, which is to take place next June, we may perhaps make it plain that all such organisation is in the hands of the officers of the International Council of Nurses—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Founder and Hon. President; Miss McGahey, President; Miss L. L. Dock, Hon. Secretary; and Miss M. Brey, Treasurer; together with the Councillors, the British and American Matrons who are Foundation Members. As soon as definite arrangements have been made, and the Programme defined, the Hon. Secretary will send invitations to the Committees of the three affiliated National Councils—British, American, and German. Following the very successful course adopted at the Buffalo Conference, the meetings will be open to all who wish to attend. No official delegates will be invited, as no official business will be done at this interim meeting. The Executive Committee will meet in Paris and make arrangements for the Quinquennial Meeting which is due in 1909.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, who is the senior European representative, is in communication with ladies and gentlemen in France, whom she will meet next month in Paris for the purpose of making final arrangements.

All official announcements will appear in the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING*, which is the official organ of the International Council of Nurses in the United Kingdom.

As we learn already that a great number of nurses intend to attend the Paris Conference, we shall at an early date announce the special terms which the International Officers have been able to make with the railway companies and hotel proprietors for the benefit of those going to Paris. Names can already be received by the Hon. Secretary, International Nursing Conference, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.

Rural Nursing.

Not long ago, in the mountain region of Pennsylvania I had an interesting glimpse of the mutual aid of country people in time of illness. The patient was an old man of eighty-three, quite a character, and well-known and respected in all the country round. His wife and grandchildren took the brunt of nursing (as they understood it) and all the housework, and every night for nearly two weeks, the men of the community took turns in "sitting up." They seemed to arrange it among themselves, as one of the incidental obligations of neighbourliness, and the family, to my belief, had no

anxiety on the subject. Every night a different one appeared, until the round had been made, and then it began again, so long as the necessity lasted. The men were wood-cutters, mountain rangers, etc., and did their day's work as usual, coming on duty about 9 o'clock.

Of course nursing in the skilled sense was quite non-existent; yet when the patient wanted anything, or when anything needed to be done, there was some one there to do it, and the results were really very good. These big fellows lifted and assisted the patient very gently and efficiently, restrained him when he was delirious, and gave medicines with a fair amount of regularity. Their presence gave a decided sense of security to the isolated family, and when they came in in the late evening they brought a certain fresh energy with them.

Alas, that in a mountain region of the purest and most delicious air there should be the same old fixed prejudice against open windows. All tight shut, some even nailed—such is the night habit of country dwellers. I would much like to know what the weird bogey is that inhabits the night air, but from the settled convictions of the people it might be something immoral. The boast of virtuous pride in times of sickness, "I never took off my clothes for two weeks," is often literally true in the country. It was true of the old grandmother. She would have considered it a heinous offence, quite incompatible with decent feeling, to have undressed and gone to bed while the old gentleman was ill.

But what a total, primitive ignorance of the true nature of illness! By day, all of the sympathetic visitors crowded into the little sick-room and sat close around the old man's bed. To have done otherwise would have been hard-hearted and unsympathetic. And, in fact, the patient liked it, and grumbled when the doctor forbade it because it made him worse. Then, when he was wildly delirious, jumping out of bed and dashing the medicine to the floor, the old wife was shocked and puzzled at his unwonted behaviour. "Ain't that too bad! I never did see father behave like that before!" and as soon as consciousness returned the old gentleman was remonstrated with for his obstreperous conduct.

Nature does many wonderful things, and after a comatose night, stertorous breathing and pounding pulse; after a later night of delirium, Cheyne-Stokes respiration, picking at the bed-clothes, and various other such manifestations, she got this old gentleman of eighty-three finally happily out of bed, and sent him driving across the mountains.

L. L. DOCK.

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