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Editorial.

THE SPIRIT OF THE CONFERENCE.

A few times in a life time there comes to some of us the rare delight of a stay in the high Alps, and we return to work invigorated and refreshed by the wonderful air of mountains, snow fields, and glaciers, and by the glimpses we have had of peaks and ranges formerly known to us only by name.

So it has been with the International Meeting of Nurses in Paris. We seemed to escape for a while from a moral atmosphere, rendered heavy and poisonous by jealousies, by antagonism, by the criticism of those who, themselves doing nothing to forward the cause of nursing organisation, endeavour to obstruct others who are working in this direction, and for one whole week we lived in an atmosphere which was mentally as invigorating as the Alpine air is physically.

Nothing was more remarkable than the unanimity which pervaded the Conference. All those present were working to the same end, the best good of their profession, and the attainment of unity of thought, sympathy and purpose, through the union of nurses in a confederation pledged to further the efficient care of the sick and to secure the honour and the interests of the nursing profession.

It was strikingly evident that, bent on the same objects, the nurses of the various nations present were agreed as to the methods of their attainment. All urged State Registration as the foundation-stone on which our profession must be built up, they recounted difficulties of the same nature as nurses in this country have encountered, they were actuated by generous motives to put personal considerations on one side, and to work for the common good.

They had a firm belief in the ultimate triumph of right and justice. The aspirations expressed were those of women working for the public welfare without thought of self, and indeed it was evident in more than one instance that personal service had been given so unstintingly to the nursing cause that the workers had themselves suffered physically. But one was continually conscious of the fine and courageous spirit which animates pioneer workers in noble causes; and what cause is more worthy of life-long service than the furtherance of organisation which, by defining and raising the standard required of the trained nurse, will result in the greater comfort and security of the sick? It was this which made the Conference so delightful. Here and there in various countries are little groups of nurses working for nursing reform, in Paris they met face to face, they knew one another for comrades, they were heartened by contact with kindred spirits.

Not the least delight of the Conference was this personal contact with leading nurses of other nations, whose names are household words to us as representing all that is worthiest, best and noblest in our profession. As in the Alps, when one meets travellers bent on the ascent of some difficult summit we salute them and wish them well, so we have met for a brief moment these comrades of ours, many of them bound on some difficult and honorable quest. We salute them and each pursue our different way, never perhaps to grasp hands again, but heartened by the invigorating contact and stimulated to fresh endeavour in our common cause.

It was a happy inspiration which decided that this Conference should be held in Paris. Its influence on French nursing only the future can show.

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