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EDITORIAL.

AN INTERNATIONAL MEMORIAL TO FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

The proposal set forth at the Banquet given by the members of the Cologne Congress, to found, under the auspices and direction of the International Council of Nurses, a truly significant memorial to Florence Nightingale, may well appear some day in the far future to have been the most fruitful of all the ideas radiated forth endorsed by the unanimous approval of the members of the International Council of Nurses.

From the first THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING has insisted that a memorial to Miss Nightingale should be commemorative of her great work for nursing education, and with the clear judgment, and professional self respect which always characterise its pronouncements deprecated the proposal to make a world wide appeal for financial aid for indigent British nurses, as undignified and unseemly in this connection. The view that the memorial should be of an educational nature found strong endorsement abroad, and it was almost inevitable that when the members of the International Council of Nurses met in Cologne, the question should be discussed informally, and that as a logical sequence it should be agreed that the Council should raise its own memorial to Miss Nightingale.

It was fitting that the proposition should be made publicly by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Honorary President and Founder of that Council of Nurses which now encircles the globe with its membership of nine countries, while twenty-three nationalities, and at least three races, were represented by nurses who sat around the board and applauded the proposition, eloquently seconded by Miss M. A. Nutting, to endow a memorial which should be of an educational character,

to the honour of a woman whose supreme weapon was knowledge.

The attempts made by men in high places to promote memorials to Miss Nightingale have been singularly unfortunate, and the representatives of her own training school appear to have failed wholly to perceive the real lesson of her life, failed wholly to apply its lesson.

Nurses have disapproved and resented from the outset the entire form and content of men's proposals for a Nightingale Memorial. They resent the egotistical attitude which led the Memorial Committee to ignore the rank and file of the nursing profession, to seek no light from the organised nurses, who would naturally, because of their lifework, have formed a ripe opinion on the matter, which should have received consideration.

They resent the application of the wretched, discredited pretext of charity—refuge of mediæval minds—to themselves, members of a modern, skilled, trained profession, which is absolutely indispensable to society in its present form—absolutely indispensable to Government Departments concerned with public health and well-being—absolutely indispensable to physicians and surgeons in their work with the sick. Without their aid all the fast-developing lines of preventive medicine, public sanitation and hygiene, and social nursing service could not make one iota of progress. To propose to make these expert women the objects of a charitable endowment in honour of Florence Nightingale, who foresaw and foretold all these lines of Health Nursing before any one else in England did so!—the very idea is endlessly ludicrous, or would be so if it were not sad, and sad it is, because it shows the colossal obstacles which women must overcome in lands where all power is obstinately held in the hands of a sex oligarchy.

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