

SAN FRANCISCO, 1915.

When the delegates of a Triennial Meeting of the International Council of Nurses bid one another a reluctant farewell, they often fail to realise how rapidly time flies, and how soon they may have the happiness of meeting again.

"Only fancy," said one who is carefully saving her pennies for a trip of 6,000 miles. "San Francisco is next year, and in 1912 it seemed so far away."

Yes, San Francisco is next year, and already our dear American friends are beginning to buzz about it. This week meetings are being held in New York, and the International officers—and those to be entrusted with the local organization at San Francisco—are busy in consultation as to what is best to do to make the Council Meeting and Nursing Congress the immense success we feel sure it will be. Anyway, one item of the programme on International Day will hold special pleasure for British Nurses. It is very probable that a great Federation of Australasian Nurses will be then affiliated with us, and as no National Associations of Nurses have devoted greater time and thought to the question of nursing education, sound economic conditions, and good professional discipline, than our sisters in the great Commonwealth, should they be ready to affiliate with the Nurses of All Nations, we prophesy a very enthusiastic and touching welcome for them, especially from their kindred present from the Old Country.

Already the professional Nursing Press in the United States is beginning to stir in International matters, and we are requested to make it known that Miss Geneviève Cooke, President of the American Nurses' Association, and Editor of *The Pacific Coast Journal of Nursing*, intends during the next year to do all in her power to interest the nurses of the "Coast" States in the forthcoming Meeting. People are often more interesting than things, and in this connection, as she is anxious to introduce the delegates and foreign visitors to the "Coast" nurses in good time, she will be pleased to receive the photographs and historettes of the members of our National Council of Nurses who hope to go to San Francisco. As we have already received the names of eight ladies who propose to be there, will they at their earliest convenience send their photographs and historettes—*i.e.*, a short report of their professional careers—to the Hon. Sec., N.C.T.N., 431, Oxford Street, London, W., to be forwarded to the lady in charge of this department in San Francisco?

THE BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY.

The object of the British Red Cross Society is to furnish aid to the sick and wounded in time of war. It is the only body recognised by the War Office for the purpose of undertaking the formation and organisation of Voluntary Aid Detachments in connection with the medical organisation of the Territorial forces. It seeks—as their regulations tell us—to prepare for, systematise, and co-ordinate all offers of help in time of peace, so as to be able to render prompt and efficient assistance in time of war. The object is therefore a very laudable one, and one which it has in common with the Red Cross Societies of America and of almost every country in Europe. But the inefficiency of the British Red Cross Society and its very limited scope, in comparison with some of the Continental Societies is acknowledged on almost every side, and it is interesting to trace the causes of this. There seems to be a vicious circle of reasons that militate against its success. One of these is the paucity of trained nurses as members. Various reasons have been alleged for this; manifestly nurses engaged in the active work of their profession find it impossible to join—many more cannot afford to give honorary services, but doubtless there are a great many who could join the service if it were made more attractive. In the present state of affairs there is little inducement offered to nurses to give voluntary services. Many do give most unselfish and generous service under very irritating conditions sometimes, but there is little trouble taken by the Society to induce them to join. One would think that being so few and far between, they would be valued the more, but trained nurses are nothing and nobody in the Red Cross Society, and are *not even recognised as officers* unless they happen to be Lady Superintendents, and of course each detachment can only have one such. The Lady Superintendent is the chief officer of the Detachment under the Commandant, and commands it in her absence. It is she who "arranges the practice and instruction of the members, supervises duties connected with special points bearing on nursing, the sterilisation of instruments, and other professional matters in the wards and operating-room" (see Official Regulations defining Lady Superintendents' duties). It seems incredible that the same instructions go on to say that a lady who is not a trained nurse may be appointed as Lady Superintendent if a trained nurse is not available. How any untrained woman can presume to give instruction on such important nursing details it is difficult to imagine. The same regulations state that for each detachment there should be four qualified cooks; of course cooking must be taught by a competent instructor, *anyone* can nurse sick and wounded! The regulations should insist that every Lady Superintendent *must* be a fully-trained nurse, and if a nurse cannot be obtained who is able to give voluntary services, then it should

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)