

Nurses. Two more Nurses' Leagues, those of the Royal Free Hospital, and the Southwark Infirmary, have been admitted to membership during the year.

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

When in August, 1912, the nurses of twenty-three nations separated after the memorable Congress at Cologne, planning to meet again at the Golden Gate, in California, in 1915, and to make the meeting of the International Council of Nurses, its Congress and Exhibition, worthy of the great occasion celebrated by the Panama-Pacific Exposition, they little dreamt how widespread would be the effect of the present war upon the peaceful arts, or how it would affect trained nurses in all parts of the world. Yet, although it will not be definitely decided till the New Year, it is practically certain that the meeting will have to be postponed. Both from European as well as from far distant countries nurses report that their plans have been affected, and they will no longer be able to attend the Congress.

Our plans for raising the Nurses' International Memorial to Florence Nightingale, which were to have been the principal feature of the Congress, are also in abeyance, for the many funds for the relief of the sick and wounded are, far and wide, absorbing the spare cash of trained nurses—never very plentiful.

NURSING IN THE GOVERNMENT SERVICES.

In the Government Offices in connection with which trained nurses are employed, and that is the majority, the principle is accepted that three years' training in a recognized hospital is an essential qualification. It is greatly to be regretted that the heads of these Government Departments, who form part of the Cabinet, and who realize this necessity in connection with their own Departments, do not insist that the same standard shall be defined for the nation as a whole, by giving facilities for the consideration in the House of Commons for the Nurses' Registration Bill, so that the public may know who has, and who has not, passed the necessary tests as a trained nurse.

THE CARE OF SICK SAILORS AND SOLDIERS.

Since the declaration of war the attention of the Nursing Profession has been centred on the war, and trained nurses have naturally wished that their skilled work should be utilized in the service of the sick and wounded. The event, however, has proved that the lack of organization and accepted standards in their profession have been most detrimental, to

patients and nurses alike. In Naval and Military Hospitals, and in Territorial Hospitals, the standard of training required of members of their Nursing Services is a guarantee that the patients will have skilled nursing. But in the many military auxiliary hospitals no such standard is enforced, and it is matter of common knowledge that the nursing in these hospitals is not that which would satisfy the military authorities in the regular hospitals. We claim that whether a soldier is ill in a military hospital, or in one supplementing the provision made by the military authorities, his needs are the same, and that if he is permitted to be sent to these auxiliary hospitals, it is the clear duty of the War Office to see that the staff of trained nurses employed is adequate.

THE STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

The only way to provide the public with a guarantee that nurses have been efficiently trained is to adopt the course which the Societies affiliated in the Central Committee for State Registration of Nurses have repeatedly urged upon the Government, namely, that a Central Educational Authority should be set up by Parliament to co-ordinate nursing education, and to exercise discipline in the ranks of trained nurses, in the same way that the General Medical Council deals with medical education.

The Nurses' Registration Bill, endorsed by the organized bodies of medical practitioners and nurses, and embodying the above principles, when introduced into the House of Commons by Dr. Chapple, on March 3rd of this year, received overwhelming support, the majority of 228 for its first reading comprising well-known members of all parties in the House. The House of Commons has thus shown unmistakably that it approves the principle embodied in the Bill, with the same object, which passed the House of Lords in 1908, and that if facilities were granted for its consideration, and members left free to vote as they pleased on this non-party measure, that it would speedily become law. Had such a law been in force, there is no question that the country would have been satisfied with no less than that its sick and wounded soldiers should be nursed by registered nurses so long as a supply was available, and we should have been spared the spectacle of women donning the uniform of the trained nurse, and after a few weeks in hospital wards, or a few lectures in first aid and home nursing, proceeding at home and abroad to nurse sick and wounded amongst our brave troops. It is the knowledge of the dangers and suffering to which the sick are

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)