

Congress. We rejoiced that the Third Triennial Congress should have fallen upon this year, and that we too should have gathered together from many nations those deeply concerned in the upbuilding of our profession throughout the world. Alas! the great tragedy that is being enacted on the other side has made such a Congress impossible. At the opening exercises of Columbia University last year, President Butler said, with both bitterness and sorrow, 'The great scholars that were to have been with us this winter will not be here; they are on the other side killing and being killed.' This, thank God, we do not have to say, but rather can we say, those who were to have been with us this year, not only from other nations, but out of our own, giving us of their wisdom and their experience, and stimulating us by their presence, regardless of nationality, are binding the wounds of the injured and fighting pestilence and famine, are giving of their time, strength and even of their money, to repair in such measure as they can the terrible devastation that that appalling remnant of barbarism, legalised manslaughter, has precipitated in such an overwhelming degree. Inspired as we should have been by their presence, their absence is still more inspiring. Never were we so internationally united, for across the great distance that separates us comes their silent testimony to the place that has been assigned to our profession in the service of humanity. Again our attention is called to the fact that our calling knows neither day nor night, neither creed, sex, colour, nor nation, war nor peace, and again is emphasized the fact that a service so weighted with opportunity and responsibility cannot be fully rendered to humanity except all avenues whereby a thorough and comprehensive technical and theoretical preparation are opened to those seeking to prepare themselves for this service. . . . We face the future full of hope and courage, and again bend our energies to leave a sound educational foundation for the future generation of nurses, whose services will never be more greatly needed than in the years which will follow this great war. We believe that the State and even the Nation should assume some responsibility in the preparation of this servant, whose services are of such wide value; and if a healthy nation is her greatest resource, she would be justified in placing at the disposal of any student of nursing the broadest educational opportunity, and we shall not rest until the institution of learning as well as the institution for the sick has opened its doors to our members, and until is required of every nurse a definite evidence through a licensing examination that she is equipped with the thorough scientific preparation through which only she can render her complete service."

The italics are mine. I fear I have already trespassed upon the space of the JOURNAL; my only excuse is, that all I heard was so interesting. In my next letter I will tell you about the great assembly at the Greek theatre, and what took place then.

Yours sincerely,

BEATRICE KENT.

AN ILLUMINATING REPORT.

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PUBLIC HEALTH OF FINSBURY.

Dr. A. E. Thomas, M.A., D.P.H., Medical Officer of Health for the Metropolitan Borough of Finsbury and Barrister-at-Law, is to be congratulated on the Report he has presented to the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough, for 1914, for it is not only most instructive and illuminating, but also eminently readable.

The Report deals at some length with the subjects of Infant Welfare, Infant Mortality, Tuberculosis and Measles.

NOTIFICATION OF BIRTHS ACT.

Under this Act, 3,277 births in the Borough were notified during 1914. "The percentage of births notified by parents was 7.8; by medical men, 4.1; by midwives, 17.7; and by others—chiefly medical students and lady midwifery students (presumably pupil midwives)—70.4 per cent. The mothers in this last group were all attended gratuitously in their confinements. This means that in 1914, 1,800 Finsbury mothers, or two out of every three, were cared for during childbirth and during the subsequent lying-in period for no charge whatever, chiefly by the medical students of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, University College Hospital, the Royal Free Hospital, and by midwives and midwifery students from the City of London Lying-in Hospital, the Maternity Nursing Association, and the Royal Maternity Charity."

It also means that an extraordinarily large percentage of mothers are receiving assistance which is more or less unskilled at their confinements; for the services of midwifery students, whether medical students or pupil midwives, cannot be regarded as skilled.

In regard to notification, Dr. Thomas reports that there has been an improvement in recent years in the notifications received from parents, but some still show "a hazy knowledge of the provisions of the Act, coupled with a serious attempt and an earnest desire to master its simplicity and observe its conditions. Many of the letters are dictated by the mother who is still confined to her bed, and afford evidence of having been drafted by neighbours called together in consultation. Some of the letters bear no address; some are in the handwriting of a school child, who has become muddled by the different opinions expressed by the persons present, and hopelessly confounded by the intricacies of converting *oratio obliqua* into *oratio recta*. Here is an example:—

"Time ————— 19th November.

"Sex—none.

"Premature child dead who certifys is date Br. Night Date 19th Noverbem female child. Presant at birth mother and the lady what makes the tea we dont know her address. Say father wasnt presant, so he dont knows about it so please

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