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EDITORIAL.

THE SPIRIT OF INTERNATIONALISM.

Those of us who have attended the great International Congresses of Nurses in the past, know the joy, the refreshment, the support we have received from contact not only with the great ones of our profession, but with those members gathered together from all parts of the world who are daily discharging the duties of their high calling with faithfulness, skill and unselfish devotion.

Now that we are looking forward to meeting our colleagues of all nations once again at the Congress convened by the International Council of Nurses to meet in Helsingfors in the immediate future, let us recall that the inspiration of the International Council of Nurses was derived from the desire to lift our work on to a high and ever higher plane, and in a materialistic age, it is well that we remind ourselves that in the Preamble to our Constitution we declare as the reason for our existence, not the hope of any material advantage, but because we sincerely believe that the best good of our Profession will be advanced by greater unity of thought, sympathy and purpose—a noble aspiration which is the inspiration of the Council Idea.

Let us remind ourselves also that the essential essence of nursing is not merely to afford skilled help to suffering and diseased humanity, but something far higher than that. It is the endeavour to appropriate the spiritual force which is the common heritage of our profession, bequeathed to us by many noble men and women, our predecessors, who have served the sick of all ages in every land; a reserve force upon which as long as we walk worthily we may freely draw. A force potent with grace, so that in helping to heal the body, those to whom we minister may discern the fineness of motive which inspires our service, and may be sustained and comforted thereby.

Aspiration should be transformed into inspiration, and inspiration in its turn into achievement. Thus, while cherishing the entrancing vision of the ideal, we should aspire to be eminently practical. To this end it is well that we should take counsel together, the object of our deliberations being to further the efficient care of the sick, and to secure the honour and interests of the nursing Profession. How far we shall achieve these ends depends upon the contribution each one of us brings to the work of the International Council of Nurses.

Further, Aspiration and Inspiration must be translated into action. It is good to be caught up to a transcendental plane for a while, to breathe its atmosphere and absorb its spirit, but the true purpose of our meeting and Congress is that we may return to our different countries and our own work there, striving to put into practice the ideals with which in the Council Chamber, in intercourse with our colleagues, we have been inspired during the Congress week.

The spirit of Internationalism is expressed not only in meetings. One of the most delightful things when passing through a country where there is a National Council of Nurses affiliated to the International Council is to find how real is the spirit of fraternity, with what friendship, kindness and hospitality we are met. With busy nurses it means that they must make a real effort, and spend valuable time to care for the passing guest, yet the guest

is not allowed to realize this, rather is she honoured and fêted. In a strange country it is good to see a familiar face, to hear capacity personified wrestling with porters to whom she can speak in their own tongue. The interchange of International hospitality is expressed in many ways by personal service and friendship, as well as by more expensive methods. And when we come again to the parting of the ways, we realize how precious are our international friendships. To this goodly heritage we enter through the International Council of Nurses.



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Founder and Hon. President International Council of Nurses.
President National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland.
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Hon. Member National League of Nursing Education and of the American Nurses' Association, U.S.A.
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