

THE PASSING OF A FOUNDATION MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

MRS. GRACE NEILL, R.N.

Amongst the Councillors (Foundation Members) of the International Council of Nurses no name is more honoured than that of Mrs. Grace Neill (*née* Campbell), the news of whose death in New Zealand at eighty years of age has recently reached this country.

Mrs. Neill was born in Edinburgh, and trained in connection with St. John's House at Charing Cross and King's College Hospitals, London, and was an Hon. Member of the League of St. John's House Nurses. She trained in Midwifery at St. John's House Maternity Home, Battersea, and subsequently was appointed Matron of the Hospital for Sick Children, Pendlebury.

After her marriage she went out to Queensland, and in 1891 was appointed a Member of a Royal Commission appointed to enquire into the conditions of labour in the workshops, shops and factories, in which connection she rendered valuable public service.

In 1893 Mrs. Neill left Queensland for New Zealand, and from that time onwards until her retirement from active work was an official of the New Zealand Civil Service, first in the Government Department of Labour, and then as Woman Inspector of Factories, being the first woman to hold such a position in Australasia, later being transferred to the Department of Hospitals and Charitable Aid, as Assistant Inspector, when the late Dr. MacGregor was in charge of the Department, and it was there that her most notable work was done, work which made her known throughout the world. The movement for the State Registration of Nurses had her whole-hearted allegiance, and she was in frequent consultation with Mrs. Bedford Fenwick on the subject. To Mrs. Neill belongs the honour of securing the passage of the first Nurses' Registration Bill in the world, for, though Cape Colony secured a form of Registration in 1891, it was not embodied in a separate Act but provided for in the Medical and Pharmacy Act.

The news that the New Zealand Act had become Law arrived in London when the International Congress of Nurses was in Session in Buffalo, U.S.A., in 1901, and was flashed across the Atlantic. The standardization of Nursing Education in New Zealand followed, and, in addition to her duties as Assistant Inspector of Hospitals, Mrs. Neill undertook those of Deputy Registrar.

A Bill for the Registration of Midwives and the establishment of Training Schools for Midwives drafted by her was next passed into Law, and the establishment of the first of the St. Helen's Hospitals in New Zealand soon followed.

Mrs. Neill was in London in 1899, and was present at the Annual Conference of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain

and Ireland, of which she was an Hon. Member, when Mrs. Bedford Fenwick proposed the foundation of the International Council of Nurses, of which she was appointed a Councillor (Foundation Member) with a vote on the Grand Council for life.

Since 1906 her life has been passed in retirement. *Kai Tiaki*, the Journal of the Nurses of New Zealand, of which she was sometime Editor, says of her: "She kept her vivid interest in public matters almost to the last, and was always glad to welcome those of her old associates who were able to visit her. She was a woman of striking personality, of sympathy, and understanding, and her memory should never fade from the annals of Nursing in New Zealand."

THE I.C.N.

The I.C.N., the official organ of the International Council of Nurses, has now completed its first year of publication, and in casting an eye over the four issues, we think those who have compiled it deserve great praise; it is a really informative and useful link between the nurses of the world, and will become more and more so, as they all take part in furnishing up-to-date information to the Editor at Geneva.

Those who study *The I.C.N.* carefully will feel they know quite intimately through their historettes and portraits the builders of the world-wide International Council of Nurses, and how these explorers and pioneers with instinct, vision and labour, have encircled the Nursing World with a jewelled chain of sympathy. It is fit that the younger generation of nurses should realise what they owe to the makers of the International, so that they too may in their turn emulate their altruism and carry forward its civilising work. We are always reading of lift here, and progress there in hospital and health methods, do not let us fail to realise what humanity owes in this connection to the tireless

energy, devotion and practical application of our pioneer nurses, and how they have blazed the trail for their successors who now enjoy such privileged status, and educational facilities. Thanks be for explorers.

The I.C.N. should be on the list of every Nurses' Library, carefully filed and bound annually. Order from Headquarters, 1, Place du Lac, Geneva, Switzerland. Price 4s. per annum.

It is interesting to learn that Miss Gladys Stephenson, F.B.C.N., is translating "A History of Nursing," by Miss M. A. Nutting and Miss L. L. Dock, into the Chinese language, Miss Dock, with her usual generosity, has presented her with a copy of the four volumes for this purpose. So our Chinese colleagues will be well informed as to the history of their profession.



MRS. GRACE NEILL, R.N.

Formerly Assistant Inspector of Hospitals and Asylums, and Deputy Registrar of Nurses in New Zealand, Councillor International Council of Nurses.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)