

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

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No. 1,908.

JULY, 1927.

Vol. LXXV

EDITORIAL.

THE INTERNATIONAL IDEA.

In a few weeks trained nurses from many countries of the world will assemble at Geneva for the Interim Conference of the International Council of Nurses, and, as over a quarter of a century has passed since its foundation in London, it is well to recapitulate the idea which underlies the proposal; for each meeting and Congress of the I.C.N. is a serious endeavour to further carry out this idea and thus increase its effect.

The Preamble to the Constitution of the International Council of Nurses as originally set forth was as follows:—

"We, nurses of all Nations, sincerely believing that the best good of our Profession will be advanced by greater unity of thought, sympathy, and purpose, do hereby band ourselves in a confederation of workers to further the efficient care of the sick, and to secure the honour and the interests of the Nursing Profession."

The objects of the Federation were as follows:—

(a) "To provide a means of communication between the Nurses of all Nations, and to afford facilities for the interchange of international hospitality.

(b) "To provide opportunities for Nurses to meet together from all parts of the world, to confer upon questions relating to the welfare of their Patients and their Profession."

Simple yet sound ideals, and the strands of the silken thread with which the nurses of the world bound themselves together at the end of the last century have held firm, so that to-day the National Organisations of Nurses which it unites encircle the world, and, in a dozen more countries as far apart as Iceland and Korea—from which National Organisations have not yet been affiliated—it has Associate National Representatives through whom it is in touch with the nurses of these countries.

The aim of the Council is further elaborated in the words now printed on the Title Page of the Reports of its Regular Meetings.

"The essential idea for which the International Council of Nurses stands is self-government of nurses in their Associations, with the aim of raising even higher the standard of education, and professional ethics, public usefulness, and civic spirit of their members. The International Council of Nurses does not stand for a narrow professionalism, but for that full development of the human being and citizen in every nurse, which will best enable her to bring her professional knowledge and skill to the many-sided services that modern society demands of her."

It is a priceless heritage safeguarded and conserved by the Foundation Members of the Council for the last

quarter of a century, and handed on to the present and future generations of nurses unimpaired as a sacred trust.

Resting on this sure foundation, the potentiality of its power and influence, as we vision the future, appears to us to be limitless in helping to promote high standards of nursing efficiency, both in the prevention and the cure of disease, and of Nursing ethics.

Lastly, in relation to the promotion of the world's peace, trained nurses hold a specially privileged position. There is no nationality in nursing. Wherever, in peace or in war, we find sickness or suffering, there it is our duty to endeavour to heal and to comfort the patient—whether friend or foe. But nurses who have seen the horrors of war ardently desire the preservation of peace. What part can we take, therefore, in promoting civilisation through respect for human life?

Firstly, we have special opportunities of demonstrating by consistent altruistic methods of life, the grace and moral value of kindness, and the beauty of holiness; and, secondly, when we know that methods are being sought after for the destruction of mankind, and that industrial unrest is a menace to the world, why should we not explore the directions in which the desire for peace can penetrate the human mind?

The social side of the International Idea, which has always been a prominent and delightful feature of our international gatherings, and is in accordance with its first object "to afford facilities for the interchange of international hospitality," has also a beneficent influence. The lasting friendships formed and cemented during the International Meetings are of both individual and national value.

Of the pleasure derived we have only to recall the instance fresh in the memory of all who attended the Helsingfors Congress in 1925. The charming hospitality extended to its members from the President of the Republic, from the Finnish Nurses' Association, from public bodies and private persons, afforded an example of the Spirit of Internationalism as understood by the Finnish Nurses, which was a constant source of wonder and delight to the participants in the Congress. And those who have had the privilege of belonging to the International Council of Nurses from its inception remember the enjoyment of the social functions in Buffalo, Berlin, Paris, London, Cologne and Copenhagen, part of the charm of which was that we were visiting a country not as tourists but as guests, and were received into the homes of its people.

Those who have experienced the stimulating, uplifting, broadening influence of the International Council of Nurses should realise that they are an integral part of it, and that the obligation of promoting its interests in every way is their personal concern, whether socially, educationally or financially.

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