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EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, REGISTERED NURSE.

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EDITORIAL.

A NIGHTINGALE ORATION.

Wisdom is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty . . . and in all ages entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God, and prophets.—*WISDOM* vii., 25-27.

The establishment of an Annual Oration as a memorial to a great personality is a practice which has much to commend it, and now that through the Florence Nightingale International Foundation the thoughts of the Nursing Profession throughout the world are centred on Miss Nightingale's imperishable personality the time is opportune to establish such an Oration in her honour.

The desire to found an educational Memorial to Miss Nightingale was first voiced during the Congress of the International Council of Nurses at Cologne in 1912. Since the meeting of the International Council of Nurses in Montreal in 1929 it has been actively advanced, and the present movement to endow scholarships for Nurses, associated with the name of Miss Nightingale, to be held at Bedford College in London, and awarded by the National Nurses' Associations affiliated in the International Council of Nurses together with the League of Red Cross Societies has received wide-spread approval and support.

Dean A. W. Goodrich, Dean Emeritus of the School of Nursing, Yale University, New Haven, Conn., U.S.A., who has recently, as our readers know, paid a visit to Europe, in a lecture on "Some International Aspects of Nursing Education and Service," given at Teachers' College, Columbia University, early this year, said: "There can be no question as to the far-reaching social value of this project, its timeliness, or the selection of London as the logical educational centre of the Foundation. In order, however, to keep pace with the rapidly expanding field of professional service in many countries, a much more elastic and comprehensive programme of graduate work must be developed. Through the grant by the Rockefeller Foundation for the proposed study of English facilities, an important first step has been made possible. This, we trust, will lead to a Chair of Nursing in London University, a step that would enable the freedom demanded for the development of the programme of any young profession. We are of the opinion, however, that the full value of the International Florence Nightingale Foundation will not be realised until there is at least one undergraduate course established on a sound professional basis. That the logical school to take the lead in this advancement, is the school founded by Florence Nightingale, will be generally conceded."

No doubt the Nightingale Scholars, as they come into residence at 15, Manchester Square, London, will

wish to make intensive study of the work, character and personality of the great genius in whose honour the Scholarships they hold have been endowed, thus it would be a laudable custom if, as each new group of students comes annually into residence, a "Nightingale Oration" were delivered to them, before they begin their academic course at Bedford College, which would do justice to Miss Nightingale's marvellous personality and work. Such Orations should be spoken by those who have given years of sympathetic study to the many sides of Miss Nightingale's life, character, and activities, and particularly to her work for humanity. For this was by no means restricted to nurses and nursing and to the care of sick soldiers, but included an intense interest in any question political or otherwise, affecting the National health, the care of women in childbirth, sanitation, and a variety of subjects too numerous to mention. It should be a point of honour with every nurse holding a Nightingale Scholarship to acquaint herself with these many activities, in an endeavour to follow the example of her great leader in her love of humanity, her passion for work, her insistence on thoroughness in every task undertaken, her concentration upon it until finally accomplished; and nothing would be more effective in initiating her disciples into the proposed course, and in inspiring them to pursue it faithfully, than an Oration in her honour spoken by one qualified by sympathetic study over a period of years, of the qualities and character of this incomparable genius.

Already several persons could be mentioned able to pass these tests, to do justice to Miss Nightingale's greatness, and to inspire the Nightingale Students with the desire to attain the high standards of professional efficiency, which she placed before nurses in training, the complete devotion to duty of which she has left so shining an example, and also to acquire in some degree the spiritual and mystical qualities which were such marked characteristics of her outstanding personality.

If this proposal finds favour, an appropriate occasion for the inauguration of such an Oration would be during the International Congress of Nurses in London in July of next year in which it is probable that nurses from at least 39 countries will be assembled.

Let us never forget, as Florence Nightingale never forgot, that technical efficiency alone—all important as it is—does not make the ideal nurse. Nurses serve in the temple of pain, sentinels at the gates of life and death, and along the often stony road which divides them. On that *via dolorosa* tenderness and comprehending sympathy, may be beneficent influences in the relief of suffering both physical and mental. It is both the privilege and the duty of nurses to extend them.

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