

NURSING HISTORY.

THE MAKING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

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THE INVALUABLE WORK OF MISS L. L. DOCK.

It may be truly affirmed that from the day Miss Lavinia L. Dock, U.S.A., was elected Hon. Secretary of the Provisional Committee of the International Council of Nurses, it went forward in the most progressive and harmonious spirit. Miss Dock devoted her rare talents with selfless devotion to its organisation.

She "circulated genially around" in America and later in Europe and with uncanny instinct came into touch with the leading spirits in many parts of the world who responded to her inspiring convictions. Miss Dock's genius was the leading influence in the International Council of Nurses for a quarter of a century and they were halcyon days.

We realised "on this side" at the end of the last century that to come into touch with our colleagues on the American continent would be an invaluable influence in our professional evolution, and so matured the scheme of the Conference at the time of the Great Exposition to be held at Buffalo, U.S.A., in 1901.

Miss Dock wrote:

"We are now talking over the plans for our two hours' grant by the big music temple on Trained Nurses Day at the Exposition, and I think it would be such a good occasion to do some 'enthusing' for the International Council. I have been more interested than I can say in the old files of the *Nursing Record* (now the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING). It is intensely interesting, so full, and covers such a broad ground; the language is English, but the spirit is a world spirit."

Suffice it to say that an Executive Session was held on September 16th, 1901, and a public meeting in the large hall of the Women's Educational Union on the following day, and it was during this week that, for the first time, the nurses of the old and the new worlds came into organised communion and received the benediction of comradeship.

No one who attended those meetings will ever forget their inspiration. Mrs. Fenwick, after expressing her deep appreciation of the honour of her election as the first President of the International, delivered an address on "Work" in the course of which she said: "The work which lies before us in the organisation of an International Council of Nurses may well impress us with its magnitude. We have written down its Constitution pregnant with power for good, but we have to make that constitution live, and to do this we must inspire it with the vital force by a fine purposeful spirit. Hence Work must be our watchword."

After describing the organisation of the International Council of Nurses, with graduate suffrage as its foundation, Mrs. Fenwick said:

"In making our Council mechanically perfect, let us remember that the vital force is of the spirit, and not of the letter of the law. In a Society which would be world-wide, which would include members of every race and creed, we must, while maintaining inviolate certain broad general principles which form our com-

mon bond of union, permit, nay foster, individuality in detail, authorising each country to apply these principles in a manner best suited to its own needs. In like manner every National Council will do well to encourage or develop the individuality of its members, for only so shall we utilise to the full the correlation of our forces, and make our Council a progressive power for good. Diversity of opinion is the very salt of life, and we shall do well to encourage rather than deprecate its expression."

The British delegates who attended this Interim Conference were Miss Louisa Stevenson, member of the Board of Managers, Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh—a very remarkable woman, a great educationist and registrationist.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Founder, International Council of Nurses and its first President.

Miss Isla Stewart, Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and Hon. President, National Council of Nurses of Great Britain.

Miss M. Mollett, Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland.

Miss E. M. Waind, League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses, London.

Miss Sophia E. Cartwright, The Registered Nurses' Society, London.

Miss Catherine J. Wood and Miss Amy Hughes (representing various nursing organisations).

Miss S. B. McGahey, the Australian Trained Nurses' Association, and many leading American Superintendents, took part in this Conference, presided over by Miss Isabel McIsaac, Superintendent, Illinois Training School for Nurses, Chicago, and coming into touch with such pioneer leaders of nursing organisations and peoples as Mrs. Hampton Robb, Miss Diana C. Kimber, Miss Sylveen Nye, Miss Snively (Canada), and all manner of bright intellects, was indeed a privilege never to be forgotten.

After the Congress Miss Dock wrote:

"Already the past seems almost a dream, doesn't it, as one gets back to everyday work again? I have put on my uniform for the regular Settlement work once more . . . I have been much struck with the evident fact that in unanimity of ideas, principles, even the apparently diverse cliques in England are all right. It is only in methods that they differ—that they each keep the "Ego" too much to the front, so that their apparent divisions are mostly leashed on personal preferences and not on ultimate purposes at all. This makes it much more promising for the future, for we can surely all control our personal prejudices to a great extent.

"The joy over the Congress is still heard in enthusiastic remarks and letters. Our Nurses did appreciate it to the full, and our delegates' visits were so much enjoyed."

THE FIRST QUINQUENNIAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

"After Buffalo" the next three years were devoted to communicating with the leading nurses in many countries—and preaching our international gospel. We held our First Quinquennial Meeting in the Victoria Lyceum, Berlin, in 1904, and delegates from Great Britain, United States of America, Germany, France, Canada, Denmark, Holland, Sweden and Australia attended. We were growing. A very memorable meeting.

(To be continued.)

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