

EDITORIAL.

WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS.

The meeting of the International Council of Nurses and the Congress organised in connection with it from July 19th to July 24th are now close at hand, and, as we hear from many of those who will attend it how much they are looking forward to this great event and how sure they are of the delightful time which is in prospect for them, our sense of responsibility deepens that those who are planning with such high hopes to attend our Congress may be able, at its close, to say that their expectations have been fulfilled, that the welcome they have received, the inspiration they have experienced in formal and informal intercourse with their colleagues of many nationalities, the beauties of Art and Nature of which England has so rich a share to unfold, and the hospitality which they have enjoyed, have exceeded their expectations. That is what we desire each one of our guests to report on their return to their own homes in the five continents. The benefit of our International Congress is not to be measured only by our enjoyment of professional meetings and the hospitality which has been so freely offered to its members. For, as the week progresses, the nurses of diverse nationalities will, through the many opportunities for social intercourse, have increased understanding of one another and, consequently, a greater recognition and appreciation of the national characteristics, talents and virtues which the various peoples of the world contribute to make a perfect whole.

Among British characteristics which are apparent may be mentioned solidarity, patience, good humour, generosity, honourable dealing, and valour, and they have taken us far. But there are other virtues, and in other nationals we find expression of high qualities through eloquence, music, the Arts, grace, expression and devotion of the spirit, ardent love of country, valour, romance. To assimilate some of these graces might lessen somewhat our admirable solidarity.

The nurses' world-wide Congress is being held at a time when the horror and ravages of war, and the tragedy which follows in its train are being demonstrated, and great nations are anxiously seeking a solution. No profession is brought into more intimate touch with the horror of war than that of Nursing and, in consequence, none more ardently desires the blessings of Peace.

The nurse's part in peace is to prove by her consistent altruistic methods of life, the grace and moral value of kindness. War may be, and is defended in the maintenance of civilisation and liberty. We cannot deny this, but we nurses have met together once again to reaffirm our belief in the principle that the best good of the world will be advanced by greater unity of thought, sympathy and purpose, that citizenship of the world is an essential qualification of those whose aim is to make it healthier and more harmonious, and that by interchange of experience we shall not only as nurses, but as human entities, increase our sympathy and understanding until we become an indivisible whole and wield potent power for righteousness.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY GASTRIC LAVAGE? WHAT ARE ITS USES? DESCRIBE THE METHOD EMPLOYED IN ITS APPLICATION AND THE APPARATUS REQUIRED.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this month to Miss Winifred Moss, the Royal Infirmary, Leicester.

PRIZE PAPER.

Gastric lavage is washing out the stomach and this may be done by means of the gravitation apparatus by siphonage, or by using a stomach suction pump. The latter method is rarely used now.

Lavage of the stomach may be ordered when it is necessary to relieve the stomach of irritating contents, such as in prolonged post anæsthetic vomiting, or in the medical treatment of pyloric stenosis, or in cases of poisoning by such substances as alcohol or opium. It may be ordered to cleanse the cavity before an operation is performed upon it, as in a partial gastrectomy, a case of intestinal obstruction, or a Rammstedts operation for a case of pyloric stenosis. It may also be done for the removal of a test meal.

If the washing out is done by siphonage the patient, if an adult, is propped up in bed if possible, and made comfortable by means of extra pillows or a bed rest. If not in bed he may sit on a chair with the head bent slightly forward. If the patient is not well enough to be propped up in bed he must be on his side.

The apparatus consists of a ten ounce funnel connected by tubing and a glass connection to a medium sized Jacques œsophageal tube, several pints of lotion, a lotion thermometer, and glycerine to lubricate the tube and a clip. Until the tube can be passed without nausea being caused, a mackintosh, vomit towel, and a vomit bowl which the patient may be allowed to hold, are necessary as he will almost certainly vomit at first. A receiver is required into which the contents of the stomach can run, a pint measure, and a large jug of the required lotion at a temperature of 100° F. This lotion may be sodium bicarbonate solution, one drachm to the pint, normal saline, solution, potassium permanganate 1-10,000, plain water or any other solution which may be ordered.

If possible the procedure is explained to the patient and after any artificial teeth have been removed, and his mouth cleansed, he is asked to swallow the tube which has already been lubricated or dipped in hot water. If necessary a gag may be used, the tube being passed over the middle line of the tongue into the pharynx. He is asked to control retching and vomiting if possible, and as the tube is swallowed the nurse will pass it gently and steadily along, stopping if retching is uncontrollable. When about 16 in. to 18 in. have passed the tube is expected to be in the stomach. The funnel is then inverted to empty the stomach of its contents which should be measured and saved for inspection. If nothing is seen the tube should be passed still further in until the stomach is reached. Then the tubing should be clipped low down and the funnel filled with lotion and all air expelled by pinching the tube, and connected up with the œsophageal tube and the clip loosened. The lotion should be run in very

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