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EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, REGISTERED NURSE.

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SERIOUS ACCIDENT TO MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK.

Her many friends in the Nursing World will learn with regret of the serious accident sustained by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, especially her friends in America, who have kept in close touch with her for so many years.

Mrs. Fenwick is suffering from a fractured femur, caused by a fall, and she requests that all correspondence concerning her accident should be sent to her official address, The British College of Nurses Ltd., 19, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7, and not to the Hospital, as she is very anxious not to add to their work.

EDITORIAL.

In a little private room, off Lawrence Ward in St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, where, over 60 years ago, as Miss Ethel Gordon Manson, she reigned as Matron, lies our beloved President and Editor, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick.

Victim of a slight accident, which, for many of us would entail no serious result, but which means for a valiant old lady of 90 summers a badly fractured femur, with all its attendant pain and misery, she faces this onslaught of suffering with the same courage and defiance with which she fought the enemies of State Registration when she was in the heyday of her youth and vigour, and she can be quite certain of our love and sympathy and all good wishes for her complete recovery.

It is good to note that in this great trial she is receiving in full measure the exquisite kindness, the gentle courtesy and the professional Nursing skill for which "Bart's" is world famous and for which she herself is in no small way responsible, being the author and pioneer of Legal Status and Government recognition for trained nurses, and so ensuring that educated women shall take up Nursing.

The battle for State Registration for Nurses has now almost become ancient history, and the story of its long and chequered career before the Act was finally placed on the Statute Book in 1919 is intensely interesting and absorbing. Yet State Registration, although the most brilliant jewel in the crown of her achievements, is not by any means the only one. Somehow, America seems to have appreciated her greatness more so than her English colleagues, proving the truth of the old adage that "a prophet hath no honour in his own country."

At this very moment, Registered Nurses all over the world are setting their affairs in order, and preparing for

the great International Congress of Nurses to be held in Atlantic City, U.S.A., in May, 1947, and it is to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's genius that we owe our gratitude, for she was indeed its Founder and its first President.

Founder and President of the Matron's Council of Great Britain and Ireland in 1894, she advocated and brought into being the Self-governing Leagues of Nurses, which were found in almost every training school in the land in 1899. Each league sent delegates to a Central Council in London, now known as the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This Council held very successful Congresses in the large English Cities, and eventually other countries were approached and asked to form similar leagues within their schools of nursing. This automatically led to the foundation of the International Council of Nurses, with representatives from every country on its executive. Brilliant International Congresses have been held in the large capitals of the world, receiving public, municipal and national honours, and thereby raising the prestige of professional Nurses throughout the world.

It is vitally important for young nurses to-day to understand the aims of this international body. I can do no better than to quote the words of its famous founder: "Professions, like nations, only flourish by the development of an individual sense of responsibility. The first aim, therefore, of the International Council of Nurses, is to organise Nurses all the world over, and to make them articulate." It is only by strong organisation and strict loyalty to one's profession, that progress can be made and the world become acutely aware of the importance of the Nurse in any National Health Scheme.

Needless to say that Mrs. Bedford Fenwick was busy with plans for the success of this coming International Congress when fate overtook her and, for the moment, cruelly laid her aside. It is surely of great interest and an occasion of pride to know that the International Council of Nurses was the first international organisation of professional workers in the whole world.

Just and due honour cannot be paid to so great a national Nursing figure within the small confines of an Editorial; the thrilling adventures of such a full and useful life can only be found in the absorbing pages of a biography. Her great works and untiring efforts for the Nurses of this country will rank with those of Mr. Churchill for the nation during this last world war.

Now we will leave her to rest and recover in "Bart's" gentle care, hoping that she can bear, without irritation, the limitations of her convalescence. We have no doubt whatsoever that with her dogged determination she will soon be up and about again, walking "across the road," to her Editorial chair, and may God bless her, and speed the happy day.

G.M.H.

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