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EDITORIAL.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF NURSES MAY, 1947.

The week of September 2nd to 8th was one of exceeding importance in nursing history, as the Board of Directors of the International Council of Nurses met in London. Under the Presidency of Miss Effie Taylor, late Dean of Yale University School of Nursing, the final plans for the International Congress of Nurses which takes place in Atlantic City, New Jersey, U.S.A., were considered.

Many registered nurses will, no doubt, make tremendous efforts to be there, and it is greatly to be hoped that many will be able to realise their ambition, for it will certainly be an event in a lifetime. There are a large number of countries which have national organisations of nurses, and many of these countries will, no doubt, be sending their delegates to Atlantic City, where rich professional knowledge will be pooled, and where international methods of nursing the sick may be formulated.

The profound and far-reaching possibilities of such a gathering of professional women from all quarters of the globe, coming so swiftly on the cessation of hostilities, is bound to attract the attention and interests of the various Governments concerned; and it is more than possible that the women of the world will be able to show the men of the world the way that peace is made. Most certainly business will be conducted more swiftly and more amicably than is the case in the Paris Peace meetings!

The International Congress of Nurses which was held in London in 1937 was a most brilliant success and a masterpiece of smoothly flowing organisation. It was a marvellous demonstration of what British nurses can do when bound by a spirit of determination and of unity of purpose. "Unity is strength," and if this unity of purpose be found in a marked degree amongst the nurses of all nations then it could, no doubt, be a great factor in the prevention of any further world wars.

The Congress to be held next May will be of thrilling interest and a mine of information. Quite apart from the excitement of foreign travel it will involve (itself always a means of education and of broadening the mind), new personal friendships will be made and old ties strengthened, and last, but not least, the health of many of our nurses would benefit by the sea trip and the complete change of environment.

War wearied nurses definitely need the excitement, the

change, the sea air and the rest. After the shattering experience of the late terrible conflict—the terrors of bombardment by night and by day, and monotony of our dull and insufficient food, our drab and colourless clothes, and ever lengthening queues and the lack of facilities for holidays—such an adventure as the Congress promises to be is just the antidote required, and it is sincerely to be hoped that as many nurses as possible will be assisted and encouraged to visit our professional cousins in America. In this respect the British College of Nurses, Ltd., is showing a fine lead by assisting some of its valued members to attend.

It is truly a matter of profound regret and sadness that Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, the Foundress of this World Congress of Nurses, could not be present at the deliberations early in the month. Unfortunately for us she is still far from recovered from her accident.

There can be no shadow of doubt that the outstanding organising genius, which brought the profession of nursing in England into such prominence and good repute in other countries, was that of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. After that of our most illustrious Florence Nightingale, no such brilliant intellect, allied to such dogged determination of character, has been revealed in our ranks, and we are justly proud that she is British, and our President.

That she may make a speedy and complete recovery is the most earnest wish and prayer of all her friends.

Most registered nurses who wish to go to the Congress must be members of an association which is affiliated to the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Most training schools in England have a Nurses' League which is affiliated, and most professional organisations are likewise affiliated, so that it behoves individual nurses, who are not members of any organisation, to obtain membership at the earliest possible date, and so avoid disappointment. As far as nurses' pockets are concerned, the adventure will be costly, and it may be beyond the reach of young State Registered Nurses who have not long qualified. For their consolation we remind them that International Congresses of Nurses are held every four years, and in 1951 another lovely capital city may be chosen for headquarters. Paris, Rome, Vienna, nay even Moscow, may be the chosen spot, and they all breathe an air of romance, of brilliancy and of adventure. It is not too soon to start striving and saving, and after all four years is not a long time—to many of us it is all too short!

G. M. H.

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