

thirty countries, for a Conference which marks the completion of the first fifty years of our Council's history.

"Here is a description of the opening session of that first important meeting in 1901—a description which might well describe the scene as it is before us to-day:—

"The Congress assembled at 9.30 in the morning, and both the platform and the body of the hall presented a most inspiring spectacle. The President of the Congress, Miss Isabel McIsaac, of Chicago, occupied the Chair, with the Honorary President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick (President of the International Council of Nurses), seated on her right hand; all the delegates and members of the Provisional Committee surrounded her in the most tasteful toilettes, and delegates and members of the Congress filled every seat. In the auditorium and gallery were over four hundred bright-faced, eager women, bristling with energy and expectation."

"What, then, were the events which led to that gathering in Buffalo in 1901? Whose was the vision which enabled the foundations to be laid on which the subsequent structure has been built? What have been the outstanding landmarks in the intervening years? From what roots have we sprung? What purpose do we serve? In what direction do we travel?

"The idea of a nurses' Council on a world-wide basis was conceived in the mind of Mrs. Ethel Gordon Fenwick, of Great Britain; and pioneer women from many countries—from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Holland, South Africa, Denmark and Great Britain—joined with her in 1899 in forming a provisional International Committee to carry this inspired idea into practical effect.

"The initial work of the Provisional Committee was the drawing up of a Draft Constitution, later adopted in London, England, in 1900; and under this Constitution, with revisions and amendments from time to time, but in purpose the same, the Council has during half a century developed its work and widened its influence.

"Until June, 1904, when a first Quinquennial Meeting was convened in Berlin, Germany, nurse representatives in many countries forwarded by whatever method seemed most appropriate in each country, the objects of the new organisation. In 1904, however, fresh and constructive decisions ordained that the Council should continue on a corporate rather than on an individual basis and that membership should henceforward be by national associations. Even before 1899, in which year the idea of an international federation was conceived, national organisations of nurses already existed in some countries. Therefore there were sound foundations on which to build; so that when active membership in the International Council was offered in 1904 to self-governing National Nurses' Associations this met with an immediate and eager response, and the principles adopted by nurses in building up their Associations in the early years of this century remain the basis of membership to this day.

"Certain it is that the foundation of an International Council in 1899 was the culminating professional event of a century which had seen the rise of nursing from something which was considered 'suitable employment for women of the lowest class,' to an honourable and scientific profession for persons of education and culture. The establishment of nursing schools; the advent of the 'trained nurse'; the growth of sub-division of her work into various and specialised branches, all serving the different needs of the community; a growing insistence on educational reform—these were the legacies of the nineteenth century to the twentieth; and as an inevitable consequence of the rise and progress of nursing and a consciousness of its obligations to the community, came the need for, and impetus towards, professional organisation, both nationally and internationally.

"It can truly be said that our International Council, now

entering upon the second fifty years of its history, has accepted this challenge, and we cannot do better than hand on to those who come after us some words of our Founder, Mrs. Fenwick—words which are as true now and will remain as true as they were in 1899:—

"The work in which nurses are engaged in other countries is precisely the same as in our own. The principles of organisation are the same in every country. The need for nursing progress is the same for every people. Our profession, above all things, requires organisation; nurses, above all things, require to be united. It depends upon nurses, individually and collectively, to make their work of the utmost possible usefulness; and this can only be accomplished if their education is based on such broad lines that the term "a trained nurse" shall be equivalent to that of a person who has received such efficient preparation that the responsible duties which she must undertake may be performed to the greatest benefit of those entrusted to her charge. To secure these results, two things are essential; that there should be a recognised system of nursing education, and control by nurses over the nursing profession. The experience of the past has proved that these results can never be obtained by any profession unless it is united in its demands for necessary reform, and by union alone can the necessary strength be obtained."

"The words, with adaptations, are applicable to any profession in any age; but they were spoken of *our* profession and by the founder of *our* Council, and that they appeared in its annals just fifty years ago is in itself a fact of outstanding significance. With truth we can remind ourselves that we are members of the oldest international association of professional women; with some pride we can claim that because we have been united in our efforts towards progress our voice is now listened to in the health councils of the world.

"An organisation such as ours must fulfil two main purposes, and this has been demonstrated throughout its history. First, it must meet the daily demands of its many thousands of members; it must be a 'fact-finding, standard-making, co-ordinating body,' responsible for the collection of information about nurses and nursing from all over the world and for distributing such information as and when required. Secondly, it must be prepared to undertake and continually pursue the paths of research into better methods of nursing education, leading to improved techniques in nursing service; and the results of such research must meet the needs of all our member countries with their differences of history, temperament and social conditions. But these activities, if they are to be performed wisely, need constant inspiration and guidance. It is to seek such inspiration and guidance that Congresses and Conferences, gatherings such as this one, have been convened throughout our history in famous cities and beautiful countries in various parts of the world, thereby strengthening and enriching our professional fellowship. Moreover, 'it is good for the health of the world,' said Miss Adelaide Nutting in 1912, 'when nurses gather together from the ends of the earth in such numbers and in such spirit.'

"So each place of meeting stands as a landmark, and there are those here to-day, staunch members of our Council, who remember them all—Buffalo, Berlin, Cologne, San Francisco, Copenhagen, Helsingfors, Geneva, Montreal, Paris, Brussels, London, Washington and Atlantic City. These names are as monuments to achievements which perseverance and unified action have hastened. Only the future will show what outstanding event in nursing history will have owed its impetus and its inspiration to Stockholm in 1949.

"The half century of our history has been an epoch of professional accomplishment; the rapid growth of national organisations of nurses, infusing the whole profession with

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