

## INTERNATIONAL CONGRESSES VS. THE EUROPEAN WAR.

JOSEPH P. REMINGTON.



The European war has come as a staggering blow to international work of every description. When the last shot has been fired and the dove of peace hovers over the world, it will remain to be seen whether international congresses will resume their meetings and whether these meetings will be harmonious, whether the passions of men, excited as they have been by militarism, will continue, or whether the reaction will cause men to forget the horrible disasters of the war and meet again to discuss and develop the peaceful arts.

That the United States of America may become the mediator is a "consummation devoutly to be wished." The almost unanimous feeling in this country is that the terrible carnage which now prevails should soon cease and peace and good will once more prevail.

It is greatly to be hoped that The Netherlands will escape further complications and that the *Fédération Internationale Pharmaceutique*, which has done so much in organizing scientific pharmacy throughout the world, will emerge triumphantly when peace is declared and in the rebound obtain greater influence than ever in its uplifting work.

It is a cause for congratulation that the American Pharmaceutical Association is a member of this International Federation, and surely it can be depended upon to join hands with Holland by assisting in the upbuilding work.

It is not likely that any international congresses will be held during 1915. The pharmacists of The Netherlands have had a most serious mission and they are busily engaged in raising funds to keep a large number of refugees, Belgians and others, from starving. What greater work can be done for our fellow craftsmen who have lost everything during the war?

The International Congress of Applied Chemistry, which met in September, 1912, adjourned to meet in 1915 in the city of St. Petersburg, Russia. It could not be foreseen by any one who was present at the notable meeting in New York that two years afterwards would see another side for chemical industries and death dealing explosives replacing the manufacture of health-giving chemicals to be used in the healing of the nations. The Ninth International Congress of Applied Chemistry will literally never meet at St. Petersburg, for its name has been changed to "Petrograd."

How can the "entente cordiale" be established? Many chemists and pharmacists who have been active workers in national and international science will have lost their lives in defense of their countries, but the hope is expressed that those who have been spared will be imbued with more zeal and that they will hasten to restore their fallen fortunes and recover as rapidly as possible from disastrous conditions, and that chemical and pharmaceutical activities will be resumed and fully restored. Surely this must be the hope of American pharmacists!

It will be recalled that the International Congress of Applied Chemistry ap-

pointed a commission to organize a movement to establish international standards for drugs and chemical substances with the object of establishing uniformity throughout the world by legalizing standards which will be operative in every country. It cannot be expected that these standards can be established immediately even in times of peace, and, although a start has been made, the onset of the war has prevented effective work from being undertaken.

A resolution (tenth) which was approved by the Congress is as follows:

“(a) That Section VIIIb of the Eighth International Congress of Applied Chemistry consider the feasibility of International Standards of strength, purity, method of testing and nomenclature of pharmacopœial preparations.

“(b) Section VIIIb (Pharmaceutical Chemistry) of the Eighth International Congress of Applied Chemistry having received and discussed the report of the International Commission on ‘Variation in the Activity of Toxic Drugs,’ resolves that it is desirable that this inquiry be continued and that the International Commission be reformed and to consist of the following eight members:

“Austria, Prof. Wilhelm Mitlacher; France, Prof. E. Bourquelot; Germany, Prof. H. Thoms; Great Britain, Francis Ransom; Netherlands, Prof. L. Van Itallie; Russia, W. Ferrein, Mag. Th.; Switzerland, Prof. A. Tschirch; United States, Dr. R. H. True, and the following three secretaries: G. P. Forrester, F. C. S., European continent: Peter MacEwan, F. C. S., Great Britain; Otto Raubenheimer, United States.

“(c) It is further resolved that this commission be authorized to enlist the co-operation of other persons actively interested in promulgating international uniformity of standards for potent drugs and improvement in their cultivation and collection.

“(d) That the International Commission of Congresses of Applied Chemistry be requested to approve the organization of an international committee under Joseph P. Remington, and composed of chemical experts approved by this commission, whose duty shall be to collect information from every available source on chemical products and the essential oils used in pharmacy, and to investigate the tests now in use to prove the identity and purity of said products and oils; also to consider standards and tests with the view of establishing uniformity in the same throughout the world, and to report at the Ninth International Congress the results of its work.”

In addition to this, the Eleventh International Congress of Pharmacy, in September, 1913, at The Hague, appointed a commission to continue the work towards the unification of the pharmacopœias of the world. This commission has a wide scope, but it will be observed that the objects and principles are the same as those of the commission of the Congress of Applied Chemistry. Medicines are not supposed to differ greatly in the therapeutic action upon men, women, and children, irrespective of their nationality, and many advantages at once appear if this great work can ever be accomplished.

When the war is over, commercial relations between the various countries will be vastly stimulated. Every nation will seek to repair the tremendous losses which have been incurred. International travel will be resumed on a large scale and it is believed that international standards will be sought. It is not likely that an international pharmacopœia will ever be published, but there seems to be no good reason why these two commissions working together cannot formulate standards for the more important potent remedies to the end that there should be little or no variation in the standards of strength throughout the world. While the work is temporarily halted by present conditions, the objects are so worthy that every effort should be made to bring about a consummation.