

recognition and friendly union of the different Associations. In a city, for instance, possessing two or more large Training Schools, the spirit in each should be broad and liberal enough to be able to recognise that each can learn something from the other, and that by united effort self-dependence, self-government and development can be better and more easily attained. Alumnae Associations should endeavour to have mutual interests; they should have the same professional standard; their bye-laws and code of ethics should be essentially the same; they should confer with one another upon various subjects important to the profession of nursing and arrange for common courses of lectures.

Central headquarters for registration should also be established. The intercourse and mutual work, that might go on in one city, could gradually be extended within certain limits to all the Alumnae Associations in one province or State. Finally, above all as a rallying centre should stand the National Alumnae Association, which should have for its object the sustaining and strengthening of all the individual societies, and besides this should occupy itself more particularly with formulating and putting into practical shape various plans which from time to time may seem to offer advantages. Thus, for instance, it might elaborate a code of ethics, investigate various financial schemes for the safe investment of Association and members' funds, and last, but not least, it should stimulate efforts towards the introduction of better literature on nursing by establishing a journal which should be the official organ of the National Association.

Such objects, however, cannot be attained without the expenditure of much time and thought. For success it is necessary to combine with untiring energy of purpose and enthusiasm, a liberal spirit, broad enough to include within our membership graduates from all good schools, and a concentration of effort which will suppress at once any spirit of unfriendly rivalry and will break through the bonds of a conservatism that works only for the benefit of individuals. Our ambition must be to raise still higher our chosen calling, and to seek to have accorded to it a universal love and respect which shall be well deserved.

In this broader outlook for nursing work, Matrons or Principals of Training Schools can render themselves important and influential factors. In their hands lies the possibility of putting the teaching of the various schools on practically the same basis. It is in their power to see that their pupils are imbued with ideas in common with those of other schools, and to insist upon the same standard in teaching and for entrance and final examinations. They can inculcate a feeling of loyalty, not only to the

Training School, but to the profession at large, and thus, by educating their pupils in the appreciation of their present and future responsibilities, they can send out a never-ending supply of graduate nurses, not only ready to enjoy their newly-won rights and privileges, but also fitted to take an intelligent share in the work to be done by Alumnae Associations. I am glad to think that already the conferences of the Matrons' Council in England and the Society of Superintendents of Training Schools in America are already exercising an ever-extending influence upon trained nurses, and are doing much for the solution of many problems dealing with their intellectual and social advancement.

The details of the organisation of an Alumnae Association must necessarily vary somewhat in different localities and under different circumstances. It is well that the Society should become incorporated and obtain a charter, so that it may legally hold property. The possession of a club-house is particularly important. A special building fund for this purpose should be established and increased by yearly taxes, and also by donations and bequests. A sick benefit fund is of equal importance. Some Associations endow one or more beds in a hospital for their sick members, where a special nurse is provided if necessary. In others it is the custom to set aside a portion of the annual dues for this purpose, or to order a special assessment for any case of sickness. Besides this there should be a sick-fund which should be under the control of the Executive Committee, who will have the right to disburse benefits for a certain length of time.

I have not thought it necessary at this time to dwell upon any one particular scheme for the formation of an individual Alumnae Association. The constitutions of those already established can now be obtained, and the best points can be selected from each. I would only insist that the greater the essential uniformity in constitutions and bye-laws of all the various societies, the easier it will become to extend their scope. The establishment of directories or registries and the subject of a National Association of Alumnae of Training Schools provide ample matter for papers in themselves.

It would seem that the solution of many of our difficulties lies in the establishment and extension of the system of Alumnae Associations. It cannot but be right that trained nurses should thus be closely drawn together and united to each other by the strongest ties. Separated though we may be by seas, or scattered up and down among the nations, we have all one common work to do; the same essential principles and methods should be held in common, and trained nurses for the sick should form one great united body throughout the world.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)