

far, that I look forward into the future of the Associated Alumnae with joy and with certainty, that it will achieve greater and better things by nurses and for nurses than have ever yet come to pass. And with such a feeling, and in such a spirit, do I invite you to a consideration of the work before us at this meeting, and of the future aims of the Association.

This meeting is full of importance. We have first to consider our methods of work, arrangements of committees and constitutional amendments. The question of admitting the smaller schools into institutional membership and with what limitations is the most important one now before us. Recognizing the immense importance of very full discussions it has been thought best that only one paper should be read at each session. These papers will deal with subjects that are of ethical and practical importance to us in beginning our work. We have one on "The Duty and Opportunity of the Alumnae," another on "The Best means of Co-ordinating the work of the General Association and its Branches," which will deal with state and local organizations; a third will deal with "Finance and Investment," and, I trust, will help to lay a foundation towards a future practical method of encouraging our members in thrift and economy. Feeling sure, then, that all our discussions will be characterised by a dignified, wisely conservative but generous spirit, I will now very briefly direct your attention to some of the problems and possibilities that the future holds for us, and which should furnish us with inspiration and encouragement to be loyal and true to the trust that is committed to each individual member of this Association. The objects as outlined in our constitution, are few in the reading; and yet concealed in each there lies folded up the seed of many a plan and purpose that can only come to maturity in the fulness of time, when the work shall be lifted from our hands, as we become incapacitated, and carried on to loftier ideals and higher aims by the strong young hands, hearts, and brains, of the future nurses. And remembering this, it may be as well if we begin by making haste slowly, but steadily and surely. For if we proceed on these lines from the first we shall have less to regret, and less to pull down later and shall end by accomplishing some little of real worth.

Our work for the first few years must, in the nature of things, be constructive. A code of ethics is the first object mentioned in the constitution. But it cannot be among the first to be realised, for such a code should be the central point of thought of the association reaching out in its influence and inspiration to our most remote branches, and towards which each individual member may look, vibrant with a sense of personal responsibility towards the association, and towards the highest standard attainable by nurses. It

should stand for deeds and actions, not words and form. Were we, therefore, to appoint a committee to forthwith formulate a code of ethics we should get words, but not the spirit. Surely, it will be better to wait until we have taken sufficient and better form in the matter of numbers and closer organisations to learn the mind of the greater number on what shall constitute our National Code of ethics. But I would like to say in passing that it should be founded not on the lines of this or any existing association or society, but should be formulated to meet our special needs in our own particular way.

The second clause reads, "To elevate the Standard of Nursing Education." If ethics is our central thought, here, indeed, is our central problem embodying, as it will in its solution, the combined and unremitting interest and efforts of every single member. Its breadth and height and depth are of such dimensions that it will require the most earnest thought of various minds before we can begin to see our way clear to the necessary steps to take for its ultimate solution. Time will only permit me to suggest some of the lines upon which a working basis may possibly be found for the present.

We do not need more training schools, but better ones. We should aim to build up and strengthen those training schools that already exist, and to discourage the establishment of others with insufficient means and unscholarly ideals. The organization of schools, in the very small and special hospitals, already appeals directly to us. We should work out some method by which the nursing in such hospitals could be undertaken, whenever possible, by the Association. I believe the day will come when we shall see our way clear towards caring for many of this class of hospitals through its members. We should have no desire to prevent the organization of these small hospitals—we would not if we could, for they have their own particular place and mission to fill in the smaller places, and for the specialities they stand for—but we must bear in mind that our first reason for being nurses, is to tend, support, and care for the helpless in the most efficient way possible, and if we can, as an organization, aid the trustees of hospitals in carrying out their responsibility of giving their patients the best of care by competent nurses, it is our distinct duty to do so, and to furnish them with a high grade of nursing, at no greater cost than would be entailed by a small training school, and untrained pupils, of which they would otherwise probably avail themselves. This system at the same time would help to materially lessen the number of inadequately trained nurses, and, so far as instruction goes, would make the qualifications for membership, in state or national associations, practically the same for all trained nurses.

(To be continued).

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)