

The Aims, Methods, and Spirit of the Associated Alumnae of Trained Nurses of the United States and Canada.*

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It would also throw better material, and more of it, into the hands of the better equipped schools, and in this way increase the educational standard of our schools, and raise the standard of requirements for women who wish to become trained nurses. Again, it would insure more continuous and agreeable work for a greater number of competent women who prefer hospital work to other branches of nursing. Such a plan as this, however, can only be rendered feasible by having a supply of specially trained women ready to undertake these positions as superintendents, and in such hospitals funds in our treasury for the purpose of supplementing, where necessary, the salaries of the nurses. For we should not be willing to have nurses undertake institutional work for inadequate compensation. For this reason, therefore, it might be advisable in the case of very poor hospitals for the association to allow their members to undertake the nursing, and at the same time to guarantee to them a fair and just remuneration in proportion to the degree of work and responsibility assumed. To insure proper nursing, then, in the poor and smaller hospitals should be one of our purposes in having money and accepting bequests.

The organization of State and local branches is advisable as a factor in educational advancement. Their importance is manifest in many, but more especially in two ways; first, because through them only can details of the work outlined by the main organization be successfully carried into effect; and secondly, from an educational standpoint the local alumnae societies are of particular value, in that through them the educational interests of the individual graduate can be best fostered and properly cared for. As we all know, a hospital training does not represent the sum total of professional knowledge, and the successful nurse will be she who keeps abreast of the times. The opportunities for further study for the graduate beyond the regular undergraduate courses are often very limited, but where the different alumnae associations of a city or locality become united, they can devise practical ways and means for the encouragement of systematic post-graduate study. It is a source of pleasure to note that in Brooklyn the Alumnae Associations have already united their forces and are doing good work together.

But it is hardly less important that these local associations should have some outside interests as well. They should identify themselves with edu-

cational and philanthropic efforts and take part so far as they can outside, in such movements even when not strictly in their own line of work. In this way only will it be possible to avoid the danger of an association becoming narrow and selfish in its life. It is impossible to more than touch upon the educational side of these local associations. Their work will be hard no doubt and sometimes discouraging, but on the other hand they will have the enjoyment and benefit that comes from unity of purpose, from the element of variety that comes with the broader contact with others in the same work, from this free interchange of all the newest and best ideas outside of their own particular school and from the added feeling of loyalty to their own society that such contact engenders. They should also lend their aid in endeavouring to direct philanthropy into the most effective channels. From the nature of their knowledge of sanitation, and the laws of health, they should in the future have representation on Educational Boards, State Boards of Health, Hospital and Training School Boards. They may thus use their influence in forming correct public sentiment in matters of social reform. Another sphere of activity in which associations may engage is, the opening up of new avenues of branches of work, affording means for employment outside of the usual ones of hospital or private nursing. The plan for visiting nurses has already been successfully inaugurated, and at the present time a local society in New York is endeavouring to redeem the application of Mechanico-Therapeutics from the hands of charlatans, and place it in the hands of trained nurses where it belongs. Last, but not least, there is the nurses' settlement work. In all such ways, and many more, may the influence of the association be unbounded, not only upon those who directly share its privileges, but upon the community at large. And so we may gradually grow into the third object of our association, that of being useful and honored.

And now, just a word on the matter of finances. It would not seem out of place for an association of this kind to interest itself in the future financial welfare of its members. For present needs, in case of illness, members of their own school alumnae associations are assured, through sick benefit funds, but it is for the years to come that provision should be made; and that, through the thrift of the nurse herself. It is a well-known fact that nurses are not very provident as a class, but could some plan be evolved, by which systematic saving would be stimulated, it would result in a feeling of security and independence for the nurse as to her future maintenance.

It seems to me that there is one feature of work which should prove of the utmost value and aid in

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