

Nurses in Council.

Duties and Opportunities of National, State, and Local Alumnae Associations.

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To the National Association, both State and Local Societies will look for guidance and for inspiration. Its objects, as stated in Article II. of the Constitution, are "To establish and maintain a code of ethics, to elevate the standard of nursing education; to promote the usefulness and honour, the financial and other interests of the nursing profession."

The chief aim of the National Association has been given as follows:—"Let our work be solely and singly educational and ethical, and our object the development of higher standards in all departments of our work. . . . The feeling with which nurses should regard a National Association ought to be entirely free from motives of self interest."

The organisation of not less than three Alumnae Associations in any State or Province shall constitute a State Association not the right to determine the subsequent admission of local societies.

The great privilege of the State Association would be its power to obtain legislation, and one of its first duties should be to take measures for establishing a definite standard of education for a nurse.

If a universal curriculum is not considered possible or advisable, a diploma which was awarded a nurse by a State board of Examiners would certainly stand for a fixed term of hospital training, a definite degree of knowledge of the theory, and also of the practice nursing. Without a provision of this sort, what protection is there for a nurse who is trained? To-day, we know that any woman who has nursed members of her own household in illness, or, perhaps, one who has been rejected after an unsatisfactory probation in a hospital, is free to call herself, should she so desire, either an experienced or a trained nurse. She may undertake the care of private patients and demand payment at the same rate as a graduate nurse, who may have spent years—not two or three only, but often five or even ten years—in hospital work of the most varied character. If the public are willing, nay, anxious to secure the services of untrained women, and such, we all know, is often the case, should we not as trained nurses, seek for some reason for this? For it is not always because their charges are less than those of a trained nurse. It has been said more than once, that trained nurses are too conscious of the importance of their position as graduates

of large training schools; their technical work as nurses may be most admired and trusted; but if they fail in adaptability, in willingness, or in those innumerable trifles, which individually count as nothing, but collectively make the peace and harmony of households, they not only fail as single nurses, but they injure the entire nursing profession. As private nurses and members of our respective Alumnae Associations, let us keep this matter in mind; let us remember always that it is the seeing of just such trifles as these in their true values, that will make us instruments for promoting the usefulness, honour, and interests of our profession.

Another subject for the consideration of the State Associations is the nursing in small hospitals. Those small hospitals which give a general experience, which have endowments sufficient to cover the amount of annual expenditure, and which grow every year in the number and variety of cases treated, have some reason for establishing Training Schools. But there are many others, devoted almost exclusively to the care of chronic cases, or to special medical or surgical cases, which have no right to undertake the training of nurses. Often there are several such hospitals in one small city—a city barely large enough to support one hospital, or to fill it with a fair proportion of general cases.

A better plan would be to employ graduate nurses in these institutions, and to add a sufficient corps of attendants and maids, who, under trained supervision, could do the general caretaking and waiting necessary for this class of patients. In the hospitals where definite special work is done, arrangements might be made with the Training Schools of large general hospitals of the nearest city, to detail a number of pupil nurses for a service of several months duration. A trained and experienced woman as head of the nursing of such hospitals would, of course, be a necessity.

It has been suggested to one that the most evident duty of the local associations is "Missionary Work," and is this not true? How are we to enlighten a public as to our responsibilities and requirements, to increase our work in usefulness and honour, unless every one of us puts forth the best efforts towards reaching those graduates of our own school who are not yet Alumnae members, and convincing them of their duty in this matter? So long as there is one graduate who is not with us, we are weak by so much as her mind, character, and influence are valued at. We are members of our Alumnae associations not for personal benefit; but because it is our first duty to unite and organize for mutual protection and improvement; to set an even higher standard of excellence; and to establish, so far as possible, better conditions for those who come after us.

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