

The American Nursing World.

A QUESTION ANSWERED.*

A. Reply to the Question often asked: "Of what Benefit will the Associated Alumnae be to Me?"

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Belonging as it does to the great city which in its rapid growth and activity it so closely resembles, it would be but natural did the Illinois Training School Alumnae Association have a somewhat exalted idea of its own importance. An association of two hundred and twenty-five members, energetic, reputable, proud of its Alma Mater with its advanced course of three years and its most efficient teaching force might be pardoned for a certain amount of conceit; but one of the first benefits received by us through membership in this association is a knowledge that we are not sufficient unto ourselves; that we can come here and, listening to our sister nurses, from their experience, learn much that is valuable. We learn, that though our ways are good, there are others better; we learn to be appreciative of the good outside and to look with more critical eyes on the faults within ourselves; we find ourselves drawn out of narrow ruts and treading broader paths leading ever upward.

We go back from these meetings with an added, but worthier feeling of pride in our *right* to belong to a body of women such as is represented in the Associated Alumnae. Democratic Americans though we are, every year we are realizing the pride of *belonging*. Ancestral societies are springing up around us and everywhere we note the perfectly legitimate pride with which men and women claim their title right to this family and that, their membership to this league and that fraternity. Why should not we, women of training and intelligence, representing the best in the highest profession open to our sex, be proud that we can point to an organization like this and say, "I am of it."

It is the duty and the privilege of everyone of us to grow, to develop, to make the best use of every power given us that all together we may bring about the greatest possible good to the greatest number.

Alone, unaided, not one of us can attain to our full height. Alone, an individual may accomplish something, but it is only a mite. Together, with unity, we are a power for good. Only recently, in our struggle for the success of the Army Nursing Bill, was it brought home to some of us how much power may be wielded by

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those same *organised* sisterhoods of which Miss Dock has spoken. Not only are they failing to correct existing evils, but through the strength of their organization, they have the power to prevent us from correcting them.

There are at least three ways in which the Associated Alumnae is a benefit to the individual nurse. It goes without saying that whatever injures the whole, injures the individual member, and what benefits the whole is equally advantageous to the individual. In speaking of the direct help gained from business, educational and social standpoints, I am voicing the opinions of many private duty nurses with whom I have talked. The Associated Alumnae give us stability. Through it we obtain recognition in the business world; through attention to the details of our own business and the effort to conduct our affairs as becomes a society in good standing, we are brought into line, we cultivate our powers of attention to detail, our powers of adaptation; we learn to observe business methods, to be methodical and careful, prudent and just. Using all of these powers to the best advantage, cultivating our talents, the cobwebs which so easily form are brushed away, rusty wheels begin to turn and from apathetic self absorbed machines, we will become live, alert women ready to meet the problems which are everywhere facing us and which, whether we like it or not, we will be compelled to meet and handle.

By the existence and the efforts of this association every school in the land must be brought to a higher standard and so every nurse lifted, in spite of herself, to a higher plane, for the stimulus of a good reputation to maintain is a powerful factor in the performance of good work. A few years back it was thought quite sufficient that a nurse spend two years in hospital training, snatch a diploma and go to work. Through alumnae associations and especially through the Associated Alumnae, we have learned, in common with other professions, that the commencement is the beginning; that to come together, to compare methods and results is quite as needful for us as for our physician friends. We know that everything we can add of experience and study for thought is a part of our equipment, that in neglecting to so add to our armamentarium is to be unfaithful to our trust.

Busy women that we are, only through this body can we plan and pursue those necessary courses of study; the systematic planning of action conducive to good results must be laid down by our Associated Alumnae. We are yet in our infancy; but as every other profession has its fraternities, its societies for mutual improve-

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