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## Editorial.

### ENTHUSIASM, DEEDS, AND WORDS.

If words are sparks, enthusiasm is the fire that, glowing in the inner nature of human beings, keeps them warmed and joyful at their tasks, no matter how hard or discouraging these may be, no matter in how lonely or obscure a corner of the world their fulfilment has been appointed.

The fire of enthusiasm creates work and deeds; noble effort, emulation, and striving, and no matter whether crowned sooner or later with success or with defeat, no less true is it that every one of these products of the sacred fire causes enthusiasm to arise afresh in the hearts of those beholding or hearing, even though this may not be for centuries afterwards.

This is the reason why it is good to have such meetings as this International Congress that is now assembled. The faithful labours and courageous efforts of our sisters in all lands shall here be told and listened to, and in the telling that consoling sense of sympathy and the understanding of our fellow workers will have new consciousness, and the sweet feeling of comradeship in work, and satisfaction in one's friends' approbation, will feed the fires of enthusiasm with fresh fuel, and make them burn more brightly and more potently through the dark days that may come, when discouragements, or rebuffs, or dull indifference tend to damp them down.

The work of a nurse is often sad, often arduous, often nerve-racking, and human beings are so constituted that the knowledge only of duty done does not always suffice to dispel the loneliness of soul that assails one now and again. For this, no remedy is better than the genial signs of the esteem of our fellowmen. But here, again, any fellowman, taken at random, is not always able to administer the healing draught. We crave the comprehension of our own kind of people, who do the same things that we do, have the same difficulties, know the same pitfalls. Hence the special solace and stimulus of our International Council, for here from every country come women who have each had, individually, in her own little province, the experiences that make us all kin.

On the way to our Congress, we met a world-

wise man, who said, "What will you do at your meetings?" Joyfully came our response, "Talk." "Talk," said he wearily, "the world is talked to death; it wants deeds, not talk." "We have a surfeit of deeds," we replied, "talk will revive us."

An astute person has observed that those who are doing useful work double its effectiveness if they know how to report upon it effectively. What is well done, but not told or written down, loses half its value, because it is not freely available for imitation or adaptation by others.

So great is the power of suggestion whose laws and forces we but dimly apprehend, and so large a part does imitation play in the progress of human beings toward civilisation—indeed, toward uncivilisation and brutality as well—that in this age of marvellously rapid communication we may indeed not vainly hope to help civilisation forward by those leaps and bounds which, we are now told, are as truly a part of the course of evolution as are those slower processes with which we have been too well acquainted in the past.

Some such reason must underly the great modern rush of those who hold ideals or are striving for social uplift, to meet together, tell experiences, compare notes, and, incidentally, appeal to the great general public to listen, read, and repeat what it has heard. Talk based on academic or scholastic abstractions—this might be a weariness and waste of time and energy. But talk based on work and deeds—this kindles the flame and stirs suggestion, and the subtle electric essence of enthusiasm spreads from mind to mind.

If any work in the world is calculated to excite enthusiasm, it is certainly the work of the nurse. Even in olden time, when nursing was only a distressing round of attempted repair of shattered humanity, or a piteous patient waiting on the hopeless misery of a crooked world, even then its interest was absorbing and perennial; how much more today, when every year brings some new vision of ways in which nurses are to be called upon to keep people in health. May we not reasonably suppose that, in the future, more nurses will be occupied in keeping people well, than are now engaged in nursing them when they are ill?

LAVINIA L. DOCK.

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