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Editorial.

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

After ten years of planning, planting, digging, and tending, the fair tree of our International Council of Nurses is now well grown and strong, with seven sturdy branches—an object of joy to those who have waited long and hopefully to see it grow. Dropping metaphor we now have an international organisation which binds together the national associations of nurses of seven countries. Our national societies are live and energetic, with definite aims and purposes, and their combined numbers come close to the mark of twenty-five thousand individuals.

The women in these national societies are in their own local circles the women who have come to the front because of their intelligence, who have been given positions of trust because of their willingness to work, who have built up organisations because of their foresight. In their own communities, these twenty-five thousand women have outgrown provincialism faster than their neighbours, they have developed public spirit and altruism sooner, they are in the lead. They are natural leaders because their tendency is, not to stand still, but to go ahead. In league and almæ societies these are the women who have encouraged and promoted co-operation; they are ready to hold office and carry responsibility, do drudgery, toil, and slave because they have the vision of what co-operation means. They are the ones who will not shirk, who cannot sit by and watch others carrying loads without trying to help, who are always ready to take their share. These active working members of whom our societies are composed are not by any means in the majority in their local groups; they are the superior minority there. Every one of us knows that, in every community of nurses there is a small group that leads, carries the load, does the work, and pushes forward, while a large group never puts its shoulder to the wheel. In spite of their weight of inertia, however, the world goes forward.

Our twenty-five thousand members are the women who have been at work improving training school methods while their neighbours accepted what they found and went no further.

They are the ones who have developed state and county societies, who have secured registration or who have never ceased to work for it. They are on examining boards, they are inspectors, they are on the legislative committees, on advisory boards, in administrative positions, in teaching positions. They are conducting our professional press, helping to make public opinion, seeking out new lines of work, trying to bring nursing in line with other liberal, advancing callings.

What is the work open to the International Council of Nurses, now built up by the adherence of these fine local groups and strengthened by their membership? Is it only social and recreative, only to bring them together for a delightful time?

By no means. The good time will always be there, but that is not our first purpose. Social amenities oil our wheels, but the wheels must revolve for the sake of bringing us to a goal. Our goal is the ever up-hill path of progress, and our real work is to strengthen the hands of our national groups, each of whom, in its own way, and in its own country, is busy helping to do the things that need to be done.

Now, when we have seven countries in membership, all united upon fundamental principles, and agreed upon main lines, each one of those seven countries is seven times stronger in its own home affairs than it was before, because now, besides its own strength, it has the support of six other national associations in its efforts. This reinforcement of strength is the first purpose of our International Council.

To make easy lines of communication is the next great purpose we have in mind. With our local groups, national, and state, and international officers, we can undertake propaganda as never before. We want to develop an international agreement upon the essentials of training for the nurse: we must kindle centres of agitation and enlightenment among our own members on social questions; we desire to disseminate as widely as possible all the newest discoveries in lines of practical work.

Then, we want to assist the great processes of character-building by encouraging independent thought, free speech, self-controlled action, and the sense of responsibility toward all those who follow after us when we are gone.

LAVINIA L. DOCK.

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