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## EDITORIAL.

### OUR WORLD CONGRESSES.

Our pleasant home, the world, has no unlucky numbers. Thirteen years have we seen slip by, since the first assemblage of nurses gathered in London at the beck of Internationalism, and stronger than ever, more confident in our future than ever, more than ever at home in our world, we have gathered from the four corners of the earth in joyful reunion for the sixth time. With every meeting we have gained in numbers, in extent, in earnestness, in enthusiasm. At each reunion we have seen farther and more clearly, have understood better, have resolved more steadfastly. Ours is a part of the vast emancipatory movement which is sweeping the earth; we are a part of the great advance of women to a larger life.

The active work of our profession, the work of nursing, has, since Time begun, been considered as especially womanly. How natural, then, that it should be one of the pioneer professions—that it should lead in the vanguard of the Woman's Movement. All-important was it that women should learn to say how their own work should best be done—that they should learn to take the helm in directing and developing it. Through compassion and pity women first asserted their right to say how their own work could be, and must be, best done, an assertion and a right that might have been longer stifled had it not been for the dominant quality of protectiveness in the characters of our pioneers; but now, with vision ever keener, bent forward to the future of mankind, they daily assert more firmly and more intelligently their right to develop and mould their own woman's work in all ways and in every direction where it leads.

To this end are our national and international associations framed, and for this purpose do we gather from the four corners of the earth. Our leaders point the way, and each member gives of her experience and knowledge. We learn from one another, and take home fresh material of worth and use. Vigorous natural growth is then seen on all sides; inspiration is contagious, and in spontaneity and freedom is the security that our work as professional women shall not be fettered and trammelled, nor cast in shapes of rigid formalism and of timid subserviency. Immense is the courage and reassurance gained in co-operation. Well was it said by an American patriot in a time of trouble: "If we do not all hang together, we shall all hang separately." So would it undoubtedly be in our work of building up the science of health-nursing, still more in our defence of good standards in sick-nursing. Were it not for the links which unite us together, and which enable one to draw upon the fortitude of all, progress would halt or cease altogether.

It is easy to see why the enemies of woman's higher advance seek first of all to keep them isolated from one another; to throw barriers around and between; to choke free union among women. But the day is past when that can be successfully done. Having once learned to know one another and to share aspirations and ideals in work, women will never again consent to give up the joy of co-operation with one another in the furtherance of those ideals.

And so our International gatherings are destined to flourish exceedingly, and to become more epochal, more significant in the general direction of nursing work, more influential; for, as we show our standards, men of large mind and true civilisation will meet us half-way in recognition and in co-operation.

L. L. Dock.

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