

preventative, and creative—germinated in the heart of destruction. If our presence here, transported over many miles with ease and speed, is evidence of man as conqueror of the forces of earth and sky and sea, it has also a deeper and finer significance.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF NURSES.

True, this gathering represents but a tiny insignificant unit of the world population. Nevertheless, we are but one of the many groups gathering together now all over this planet in increasing numbers at more frequent intervals as—or possibly more universally representative—concerned with life problems common to all; designated as international; motivated by a desire to give and to obtain; indicative of a spiritual rapprochement than which no greater force can be aligned for the breaking down of the physical, not less than the intellectual boundaries that the blindness, not the intelligence, of man has set up.

There are those who hold ideas as living entities, that like seeds take root when falling upon fertile soil—a conception similarly expressed by an English writer as follows:

“When the mind of the West grasps in all its far-reaching application that the science of power in the social integration is the science of directing the collective will over long stretches of time to definite ends through the emotion of the ideal, it will mean a new order of civilisation.”*

In this I find embodied my thesis, which, for the sake of clarity or better understanding, I briefly rehearse as follows:

Beginning with the Western civilisation's story of the creation of the World, or the lore of the ancient East, down through the ages, the idea of the unity of the human family, the integrity of the whole, has prevailed. Seemingly lost in the warring of tribes; in the increase and the separation of peoples, it has ever reappeared reinforced and strengthened. In our present age it is expressed politically by the democratic state.

Commercially, however great the shortcomings, it nevertheless expresses itself through trade rather than plunder. *Religiously*, its expression is found through the increasing tolerance of different creeds, a seeking for a unity of religious expression through an elimination of terms indicative of differences as inferiorities. There is also, we believe it would be acknowledged, an almost entire disappearance of the Union of the Church with a political state. *Philosophically*, its expression is found in an intensifying search and research for means whereby may be achieved a common consent in those principles, methods, ways of life, that will attain the highest ends. Its best expression in the United States would, I think, be found through Dr. John Dewey, who presents in his “Reconstruction of Philosophy,” “Knowledge, through the revelations of science, as power to transform the world,” namely, practical, rather than contemplative knowledge. *Socially*, finding its root in charity, which we may perhaps define as the voluntary assumption, by *those-who-have*, of a responsibility for *those-who-have-not*, but now rapidly flowering into the ways and means for universal self-support or independence, this last expression having created or called into existence the new but now familiar social sciences, sciences for the application of which are required in ever-increasing numbers varied types of workers, outstanding amongst which is the health group, for in health we have an objective of universal concern, a common denominator at last with indeed many numerators, among which we find Nursing.

THE HEALTH GROUP: A COMMON DENOMINATOR.

From its inception as a tiny silver thread of emotion, strengthening, deepening and expanding, we trace nursing through ancient temple and Roman matron, through monastery, convent and palace, modern institutions and

organisations with ever widening scope and increasing power until we find its enlightening radiation permeating the social structure. It is interesting to note as we follow the varied stages of the growth and development of the nursing programme, that the demonstration of its social value has led to ever higher planes in preparation for further services. Not less than the Crimean War demonstrated the value of her services to the sick, did it promote the nurses' preparation for broader fields and through a programme of preparation that introduced her to Science.

THE NURSE A SOCIAL FORCE OF STUPENDOUS IMPORT.

It is of profound interest when struggling for a more comprehensive curriculum and one more soundly based on science, to find that in the founding of the Nightingale School at St. Thomas's Hospital, courses in such sciences as chemistry, physiology and hygiene, were included in the original programme of study. The demand of Science for method and technique, turned Nursing back to Art, and both called for direction by Education. Science—“method of denoting,” Art—technique of producing, Education—“the liberation of capacities.” Because in the Nurse we find such instincts as succour, conservation, prevention, and creation, we have an instrument that should be fully attuned for the application of the findings of science, so rapidly multiplying, to the daily life of the individual—a social force at a period of human progress whose part, if understood by those preparing her for the field, by herself and the community at large, is of far-reaching, I even dare to say, of stupendous import.

THE THREE GREAT EXPRESSIONS OF PROGRESS.

If the message of the three great expressions of progress—science, art, and education—in the last of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth, dealt with source, and thereby gave promise of cure, of prevention, even of total elimination of certain evils or ills considered previously to be man's inevitable heritage, the message to-day is manifold and still farther reaching. Ills, it finds, whether designated as crime or disease, root down into properties increasingly submittable to analysis and change through a bewildering mass of scientific development, biology and chemistry joining in bio-chemistry, to ends we scarcely dare to predict; psychiatry heel to heel with psychology, with eugenics looming large in the background, announce the measurement of intelligences and even prophesy the creation of goodness; while nearer to the present in their practical immediate uses are nutrition, hygiene and sanitation—all concerned with a sum total which is called normal or healthy man, otherwise abnormal or unhealthy.

One of our brilliant American minds has suggested, as a reform to end reforms, that those charged with the administration of the Government should observe Mr. Luther Burbank, the wizard of agriculture, grow one potato scientifically. In this suggestion, I submit, is a brief *in extenso* for the application of Science to man's own higher development—a purpose or objective if adopted, in which the nurse consecrated by name (nurture), tradition, and personal volition; possibly also, as a woman, by instinct to the conservation of the race, must take her part. To review the avenues through which the nurse finds approach to the race is to carry her service into home, school, industry, recreation, institution, and organisation—on the sea and in all lands, in peace and in war—a messenger unique in her opportunity of conveying, inculcating, and extending knowledge—a potential exponent by practice, even more than precept, of the findings of science, art, and education in relation to the promotion of accepted goods and the lessening of acknowledged evils: an agent with an unusual opportunity, through contact with parent and child at frequent intervals, and of comparatively long duration, and one whose contacts, furthermore, take place at most

* “The Science of Power”: Benjamin Kidd.

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