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EDITORIAL.

SCULPTORS-IN-TIME.

Some Reflections on the Interim Conference of Nurses at Geneva.

The activities of the recent Interim Conference of the International Council of Nurses tempt one to reflection on many things of which these activities are but one of the outward expressions, reflection on forces, generated in the past, which have taken to themselves definite and separate life in the course of world progress. Any generation of energy such as that which took shape in the foundation of the International Council of Nurses (just as is the case with any other force or energy), when once set free, passes beyond the control of those, who set it loose, to be used in all directions, to play its destined part in the configurations of time, to accomplish all sorts of developments in the wide places of evolution, developments little dreamt of perhaps in that age into which the force of inspiration fell, and which lie, in their entirety, out beyond the horizon even of the initiators of the movement; they belong to ages that lie far out in the future, to new epochs of civilisation each with its own peculiar consciousness and requirements. At the commencement of some new movement or impulse there may be few who recognise that therein lies something which is to have its growth where time becomes space, which is to be a factor powerfully influencing the well-being of humanity.

To the beginnings of any movement which is life-bearing, there must come first the forces of thought, then follows imagination and, out of this, there develops inspiration; the one grows quite naturally out of the other and, with the last, comes vision. If this vision is one that has in it a message for the future, if it be glimpsed worthily, then to those who see it, it becomes "a bourne from which no traveller returns," for, once seen, it is something that must be materialised in time. In such reflections as these, one is led, irresistibly, to think of impulses and movements, some great, some small, arising throughout the ages of world history, and to look at them in a more or less philosophical-psychological attitude of mind. Then, irresistibly still, thought flies back to the Greek Age, and tries to sense something of the consciousness of that people which, according to Goethe, has "dreamt the dream of life the best." We see the temples where, with a deep esotericism, the priests drew, for the people, inspiration from their gods. And now, in this newer age, this age of individualisation and of the development of will, men and women have to build their temples of

vision within themselves, on the foundations of thought, gradually drawing to itself imagination, inspiration, and then the clear vision of a message for the time. At first, this message can be given out only slowly, painfully; there is the uphill, sacrificial work of opening the eyes of others to the vision, of awakening those immersed in the easy flow of a progress that is still dependent on the push given in some earlier age, a progress that has become anachronistic because the sculptors-in-time have forgotten a fact that all such sculptors must remember, the fact that "all progress is strife to the end."

But when the few—always we find it is but a few who lend a hand for the first strokes in the founding of a new impulse—when these few have beheld the vision, then must they commence, with hammer and chisel, their work on the hard rocks of custom, and they ring, these hammers, strongly, bitterly, some would say, against a sentiment that too often hides decadence under its glamour; they strike too against opinions and usages right for a previous age, but backward and inharmonious for a later. And as the hammers fly or the chisels go on with patient, incessant moulding these sculptors-in-time rear up against their efforts forces of reaction, a perfectly natural sequence to work which has in it forces of growth and of change. And, if these forces of reaction flourish for a time, it matters little in the end, for the patient chiselling goes on, and strong and clear at times you hear the hammers preparing the way for a metamorphosis at last, against which the old-time forces of reaction and prejudice crumple up and disappear. The vision of the sculptors has become a thing acceptable, recognised as one in harmony with its time and, in the case of nursing organisation and education, one calling for all the initiative, courage, altruism, self-determination, and self-government which women can bring to a development that is peculiarly their responsibility.

Yet often the work will be difficult as the force of the impulse grows. Mists of expediency may blind the eyes of those called to the sculpting, inertia may enfeeble the arms of those who hold the hammers, flaws there will be to be made good when some have not seen the vision too clearly; but, sooner or later, the vision, if it be a true one, is materialised in time, the explorers "arrive."

And so, in a nursing movement that has girded the world, carried stimulus into all departments of nursing and public health, we see part of a great development in the profession and its mission for our age. Those who first glimpsed the vision know well that the movement has become, in its influence, macrocosmic, that it bears within it its own destiny at last, but, be it remembered, its life forces and its forces of growth are not in its

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