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## THE WATCHWORD.

### SERVICE.

From the foundation of the International Council of Nurses, it has been a laudable custom to give a Watchword which shall be the working motto of the Council from one meeting to another—Work—Courage—Life—Aspiration—each in turn has served to unite the Members of the Council in a common endeavour.

*Work*—the task of building up National Councils of Nurses in every land, the result of which you see before you in this great Congress.

*Courage*—"All progress is strife to the end," and the nurses of many nations assembled in this hall know that to effect the organisation of a profession, in the face of opposition, pioneers who dare to stand alone need to take their courage in both hands. Much has been done since this Watchword was given in 1904 to raise the standard of nursing, to organise nurses, and, consequently, to improve the care of the sick. It has required Courage.

*Life*—to proclaim that health and happiness are synonymous, to teach fearlessly that the well-spring of life must be pure—to contaminate it a crime; and that the life-giving elements are the common rights of the community. Here, too, the work of the Nursing profession is resulting in many directions in fuller life.

At our Congress in Cologne in 1912, I gave as our Watchword *Aspiration*, and invited our Affiliated Associations to translate it into accomplishment during the next triennial period, especially in one particular:—"Do not let us allow the inspiration of our Conference to evaporate in sentiment. We need to capture, concentrate and utilise it as a compelling force in the upraising and resultant happiness of all things sentient."

The Watchword which I have chosen for our next Quadrennial Period—*Service*—links together all the others in a common purpose. We are happy that our Profession is a vocation of unlimited opportunity of service to the world at large. And wide sympathies, knowledge, kindness, tenderness, all are needed to meet the demands of our daily work.

Since the first Watchword was given, the large majority of nurses have not only become professional women registered by the State, but they are enfranchised citizens whose duty it is to aid in the acquisition of knowledge with the aim of promoting a high standard of National Health, for upon physical advancement and health the whole social evolution of mankind is dependent.

In the development of this social evolution, it is the high privilege of the Nursing Profession to play an honourable and indispensable part, and for this to be

effective the nurse must first study and keep in her mind the normal standard of health. It should then be her constant endeavour, by precept and practice, to bring all with whom she comes in contact to approximate to this standard, and to give skilled care to those who fall below it, so that they may be restored to the normal standard at the earliest possible moment.

The most precious possession of mankind is health; it should be the heritage of each one born into this world; its impairment is inevitably a handicap in the race of life, and it should be a reproach to any nation if the health of its people is below that attainable.

It is the mark of a profession, and more especially of a profession such as Nursing, which is concerned with the service of humanity, that its members are ever on the watch for a wider field of Service.

Half a century ago, a Nurse's choice of a career was practically restricted to general hospital nursing, private and district nursing. Now the door stands wide open. Opportunities are unlimited.

In the Public Health Service, including maternal care and infant welfare, the great Services which care for our sailors, soldiers and airmen, the care of mental and infectious diseases, and prison, industrial and insurance nursing, the nurse's services are eagerly sought. Educational posts include the Sister Tutor, and in journalistic and secretarial positions in connection with Nurses' Organisations the Registered Nurse is indispensable.

And we may glory in the knowledge that this great increase of opportunity is ours because of the faithful service, in such restricted spheres as were open to them, of those who have gone before, that its value was so recognised that the desire for it became more and more insistent. The reward of our service, and the measure of its success, has been the ever-increasing call for a rising quality of service.

Each generation has its own peculiar problems. The foundations of our profession have been well and truly laid, minimum standards of nursing education have been defined, the nurses of to-day have come into their heritage of legal status, and an assured position in the body politic, without effort on their part. Their problem is how to render "true and laudable service"—to meet the constantly increasing demands upon their organising ability, skill and kindness—and the one without the other is largely discounted—so that they shall not fail the public who rely upon them; so that they shall serve one another in their organisations loyally, willingly and with energy.

How is all this to be achieved? Yours is the problem. I leave it with you, knowing that you will not fail your generation, but, like your predecessors, will strive to

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