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EDITORIAL.

THE CARE OF LIFE.

At the memorable banquet arranged by the Canadian Nurses' Association, at Toronto, during its Silver Jubilee week last June, an Address of rare distinction, which made a profound impression on all present, was given by Dr. Ira Allan Mackay, Dean of the Faculty of Arts at McGill University, Montreal, whose unexpected death at Chester, Nova Scotia, has caused widespread sorrow, and nowhere more than in the ranks of trained Nurses in Canada, to whom he was so true and discerning a friend.

Dean Mackay urged his hearers to remember that the springs and sources of real life were individual, and said that all social obligations were but another name for those obligations the individual owed to the community, each in his own way. With this sense of individual contribution one must approach the care of life and the problem of mind and body. "Oneness of mind and body" is, he said, "an obvious fact in every moment of our lives. Whatever affects the body affects the mind sooner or later, and whatever affects the mind affects the body immediately. Both mind and body must be equally respected in the care of life. I commend this truth to you in the practice of your profession."

Continuing, Dean Mackay said: "The medical profession is chiefly interested in the cure of the body, but the oneness of mind and body must always be the first axiom in your profession. It is no doubt necessary that you learn all you can about medicine and surgery, but I see a far greater opportunity than that for the education of the Nursing Profession, engaged as you are in the care of life in all its phases. Indeed there is nothing that is finest and best in the most liberal education that should not be of greatest value to you in your work, and, if you follow this suggestion, I know that your profession will continue to grow in importance in the future and you will then be needed not only in the hospitals and in the homes, but in the schools and industries and public services and wherever the care of life is needed."

Has not every nurse who has pondered over her work and its meaning felt subconsciously the need for the care of life, and of that oneness of mind and body emphasised by Dean Mackay, and for this reason has regretted that the training of nurses in bodily and mental diseases has for so long been so completely dissociated?

In giving the Watchword for the ensuing triennial

period to the International Council of Nurses in London in 1909, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Founder and Hon. President, predicted that the practice of Nursing in the future would not be restricted to a few years' mechanical training in hospital wards, and subsequently to a more or less narrow sphere of influence, but that under a comprehensive curriculum, defined by State authority, it would attain a definite value to the community, that it was not sufficient that the nurse of the future should be the instrument for the relief of suffering, she must also be the harbinger of its prevention.

"Inspired by a fine militant spirit, she would make determined war upon the fundamental wrongs which conduce to low vitality and physical deterioration, and she would appreciate that the beneficent scheme of life is embosomed in light and beauty. She would proclaim that health and happiness are synonymous, and would teach fearlessly that the well spring of life must be pure—to contaminate it a crime; that the life-giving elements are the common rights of the community, and that in the teaching of health's law we should enter into the fuller complement of life."

So our Watchword, until we met in Cologne in 1912, was "Life." "Life in its depth, variety, and majesty—a very sweet and precious gift. Life of which we do well to gauge the value of single minutes.

"Knowledge, truth, love, beauty, goodness, faith, alone give vitality to the mechanism of existence.

"To be conscious of the true essentials of life, to cherish them, and thus cultivate the sanctities necessary to the fullness of being."

It is only a short fifteen years since a Ministry of Health was established in this country and, already, we are seeing the value of its work in its influence in many directions.

In the care of life, in infancy, in its prime, and in old age, in the prevention of disease and the inculcation of the laws of health, no one is a more acceptable teacher than the trained nurse. Her responsibility is commensurate with her opportunity.

And her opportunity was never greater, or her prospects brighter for service in the care of life, than at the present time, when, through the establishment of the Florence Nightingale International Foundation a permanent centre is provided where trained nurses, from all parts of the world have the opportunity of post graduate education qualifying them still further for the advancement of Nursing Service, for teaching the laws of health and for the skilled care of the sick. To the fulfilments of both these ends Miss Nightingale's genius was applied in unremitting life-long service.

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