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EDITORIAL.

THE PURPOSE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT.

With the coming of September the first signs of autumn appear, and the minds of members of Nursing Schools are turning to the new academic year which will shortly be upon us. Holidays are drawing to a close and already plans are being made for autumn sessions. Next month the Medical Schools will inaugurate new Sessions with befitting pomp and ceremony.

With less ceremony, but quite as definitely, the Nursing Schools will do the same. New courses of lectures are planned to cover the teaching required by the Syllabus of the General Nursing Councils, and probationers, notebook in hand, will attend to receive and absorb the instruction which they hope ultimately will enable them to pass successfully the examinations which will entitle them to place the coveted letters S.R.N. after their names, and denote that they have satisfied the examiners appointed by the General Nursing Councils that they have acquired the theoretical and practical knowledge which authorises them, "in pursuance of the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, to take and use the title of Registered Nurse."

There are also the classes of nurses who, at the last examinations of the General Nursing Councils for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, attained this professional status, and with it the much-prized freedom to study those subjects which specially attract them, without having to keep before themselves subconsciously the requirements and idiosyncrasies of examiners in forthcoming examinations.

Other privileges and responsibilities are also theirs with this newly acquired freedom. They are accredited members of the great and splendid profession of Nursing, a profession which, through the devotion of its pioneers, has acquired a reputation which is held in world-wide esteem and which is an indispensable national Service. It should be the aspiration of every State Registered Nurse to maintain and add to the value and reputation of that Service. And because union is strength the State Registered Nurse should acquire membership of one of the professional Associations of nurses to which State Registration gives her an open sesame.

In the League of Nurses in connection with her own Training School, where such has been formed, she will find an opportunity for learning business methods, for testing and developing her powers of debate and public speaking in a friendly and informal atmosphere, and, if the League is based on self-governing lines, and thus

eligible for affiliation with the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, she will find herself brought into relation not only with members of her profession in other Nursing Schools in the United Kingdom, but with the great confederation of the International Council of Nurses. As a member of that world-wide organisation, founded at the Annual Conference of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain in London in 1899, she will find that it has so caught hold of the imagination of nurses that from professional organisations in 32 countries trained nurses have flocked to its standard, and in whatever country its quadrennial Congresses meet its members receive Royal and Civic recognition.

The Preamble to the Constitution of the International Council of Nurses, adopted in July 1900, was as follows:

"We nurses of all nations sincerely believing that the best good of our profession will be advanced by greater unity of thought, sympathy and purpose, do hereby band ourselves in a confederation of workers to further the efficient care of the sick and to secure the honour and the interests of the Nursing Profession."

The first article in the Constitution defined as its objects:

(1) To provide a means of communication between the nurses of all nations, and to afford facilities for the interchange of international hospitality.

(2) To provide opportunities for nurses to meet together from all parts of the world to confer upon questions relating to the welfare of their patients and their profession.

These simple objects, covering so wide a ground, have proved sufficient to meet the requirements of the I.C.N. and with a few verbal alterations have remained those under which the Council still works.

Nurses have a goodly heritage, and while, through the International Council of Nurses, they have received an immense amount of pleasure, a widening of their horizons, and have made much-prized friendships with nurses of other nations, the main concern of the International Council of Nurses has been to demonstrate that in our corporate capacity we must have the right to live and move and have our being, that it is from our own ranks that the women must step out, to whom the responsibility of guiding our destinies must be entrusted, women, strong and faithful, able and willing to maintain intact the trust imposed upon them. That is the duty and the privilege of Registered Nurses, a privilege which they do well to recognise and assimilate in the interests of the sick whose welfare is their purpose in life, and which, therefore, they must guard as a most sacred trust.

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