

## B O O K S

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### LA CRUZ ROJA EN MI VIDA Y MY VIDA EN LA CRUZ ROJA<sup>1</sup>

by

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“ One cannot fail to draw attention to this work for its sympathetic tone and its moments of enthusiasm.” This appreciation, which the *Revue internationale* made in 1927 of Mrs. de Rueda's book “ Ginebra y la Cruz Roja ”, applies equally to the book produced by her son, who is at present delegate of the Mexican Red Cross in Europe. One can find in this work, which has just been published, the same assertion of the possibilities of mutual aid, and a similar confidence in everyday life in the Red Cross ideal and the fine actions which it is capable of accomplishing. The preface by one of the leading personalities of the Spanish Red Cross, the Duke of Hernani, is written in a just and friendly manner.

Mr. de Rueda recalls the events in which his mother was closely involved, the humanitarian efforts which she made in Geneva and at international conferences as delegate of the Mexican Red Cross until her death in 1957. The son now carries out the same functions as the mother. He describes the events and influences which compelled him to those ends in this warm-hearted book. In the last chapters he meditates at length on what the Red Cross represents today, its principles, its means of action and its future on the threshold of a new century of existence.

The work is divided into three parts. The first and the second of these, which correspond to the title, give an account of important milestones in the history of the International Red Cross over the past fifty years, not only in Geneva, but also in Spain and Latin America. The author knows these countries well and we take part in his efforts to make the Red Cross idea even better known there, especially through his broadcasts which take place at regular intervals. He thus stresses the importance of the Geneva Conven-

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tions, in particular article 3 common to the four Conventions of 1949 and recalls the part played by the Mexican delegation in the international sessions of the Red Cross at Stockholm in 1948, Mexico in 1951 and also at the 1949 Diplomatic Conference of Geneva.

In the third part of the book the tone changes. It is here no longer a question of history, but of the author's ideas about Red Cross principles, the chief of which, according to him, is that of humanity. Then following the principle of neutrality are those which have been analysed by Mr. Jean Pictet, to whose fundamental work Mr. de Rueda refers.

What, then, is a principle? It is, according to the author, a creative idea intrinsic to reason, existing as an innate entity which the thinker himself discovers. This means that there are permanent values which subsist through all time and are invariable. The author maintains that the principles of the Red Cross are of this order.

This is not the place to initiate a discussion of pure philosophy. The Red Cross, however, is attentive to all opinions and suggestions, from wherever they may come, which take their inspiration from a humanitarian ideal.

Other important problems are also examined. The author considers that the Red Cross, in order to remain itself, should continue to appeal, as far as is possible, to voluntary workers as it so widely does in the Spanish-speaking countries. The idea of human solidarity is there its motive force. It should, however, avoid competing with the official social services. One is in full agreement with Mr. de Rueda when he concludes by saying that the Red Cross will continue its fertile work, if it knows how to base itself at all times on the idea of unity, thanks to which men come closer to one another both morally and materially. This, in the last analysis, means the arrival of real peace.

*J.-G. L.*