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EDITORIAL.

THE NEW YEAR.

The New Year opens with the war cloud still overhanging the world, but with the men and women of the British Empire determined as ever that the fight shall be fought to a finish. And the gallant men of our Navy and Army, and those of our Allies, steeled to endurance, are carrying on the war animated by a strength and valour which no war for territorial aggrandisement can ever produce.

They are fighting, and they know it, for liberty of spirit, for the honour of their wives, sisters and daughters, for the safety of their children, for the protection of their homes, for all that they hold most dear and most sacred, and inspired with a belief in the justice of their cause, go forth to battle.

And nurses too go forth with as stern resolve as that which animates the men of the combatant army, and with as high inspiration, because they know the war they wage is a holy one. It is war on the disease, suffering, privation, death, the useless sacrifice of the lives of men, women, and innocent children which follow in the wake of war as surely as night follows day.

That they have played a noble part all will admit, but none are more painfully aware than nurses themselves that, with better organization, with the utilization of the trained and expert services available, and with a freer hand given to those qualified by professional knowledge and personal ability to give expert help, very much better work could have been done, and more valuable service rendered, than has so far been the case.

The circumscribed outlook of the heads of the Army Medical Department at the War Office permits them to rest satisfied with the organization of the Regular and

Territorial Nursing Services, the thousands of civilian nurses remain unorganized, and consequently to a great extent ineffective for war service, for preventive nursing, for the care of refugees, for all the special work which the present exceptional conditions demand.

In civilian life we have come to realize that the care of the sick and diseased is only a section, and perhaps not the most important section, of a nurse's work. Preventive nursing is of supreme importance. Its position in connection with military nursing is of equal importance, but, so far, the opportunity of demonstrating its value has not been accorded to it.

In the early days of the War the National Council of Trained Nurses expressed to the Director General of the Army Medical Service at the War Office, the opinion that the lack of domestic and nursing organization in connection with camps, billets, rations, laundry and preventive nursing had resulted in a serious amount of sickness and suffering among the recruits of the new Army; it further pleaded, in support of the scheme put forward by its President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, that a new Department of the Sanitary Service of the Army might be organized by the establishment of a Sanitary Nursing Service.

The uses of such a Service are indisputable. Expert nurses, with the qualifications necessary for its organization are available. Nurses of high professional attainments appreciating the necessity are ready to enter its ranks, but the official permission for the creation of such a service is lacking. The great need of the nursing world is the authority to organize its members for war service, and until this is entrusted to it the nursing profession will fall short of the best it is capable of achieving.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)