

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, REGISTERED NURSE.

No. 1,938. Vol. 78

JANUARY, 1930.

Price Sevenpence

EDITORIAL.

WHAT CAN I GIVE?

"Give strength, give thought, give deeds, give self,
Give love, give tears, and give thyself;
Give, give, be always giving;
Who gives not, is not living."

C. H. SPURGEON.

There is always an invigorating atmosphere about the beginning of a New Year; it is a time of limitless possibilities as we enter on the unknown; it is ours to make or to mar.

And the present time is one of great opportunities. On all sides, whether in relation to our professional work, its scientific or its practical aspects, never before have so many vistas opened for the use of our special and skilled knowledge in all directions. How shall we direct our lives that we may give to those whom we serve of our best?

In other directions also our services are in demand. The foundations of our profession have been well and truly laid on the firm basis of legal registration by the work of the few, and a fair edifice can be erected upon them. But for this the service of all its members is necessary, and every generous impulse in our hearts surely inspires us to ask: "What can I give that the honour and the interests of my profession may be advanced during the coming year? What seeds can I sow which will bear fruit in the future?"

Those nurses who had the pleasure and the privilege of attending the International Congress of Nurses at Montreal had before them an example of what may be achieved for the benefit of the Nursing Profession, and for the community at large, by an idea put forth as the inspiration of one mind and brought to fruition by co-operation and selfless work. The splendid result has been that over 142,000 nurses are combined in an Association having common aspirations, aims and ideals. Such an organisation must be a force in the world whose views and decisions on nursing matters are listened to and treated with respect.

But, though in 30 years the International Council of Nurses has attained this authoritative position, much may be done to strengthen and extend its beneficent work. Until every Registered Nurse is gathered into her League, Fellowship or Alumnae Association, until these Associations are united in National Councils, and these self-governing National Councils enter into affiliation with the International Council, the most possible has not been achieved. And it is just here that the brains and service of every individual nurse are

needed. Where a Training School has no League of its certificated nurses there is an opportunity for them to combine and form one. Where Leagues already formed are not affiliated to their National Council then the members should not be content until they are qualified to enter into such affiliation; they have the power if they have the will.

Then professional organisation cannot be carried on without expense, and therefore each one of us should consider what she can afford to help to support the various professional societies with which she is associated, for the small subscriptions, even if paid regularly and punctually, are not sufficient to maintain the various activities which they carry on for the benefit of nurses and nursing.

Many nurses we believe have not sufficiently considered this side of their professional obligations, and in this relation we consider that of all the societies of nurses with which we are acquainted the palm must be given to the Royal British Nurses' Association, the members of which contribute generously to the many useful funds which it maintains. During the past year alone its Benevolent Fund has benefited to the extent of over £1,700 by the gift of one member and the legacy of another, and the General Fund by a legacy of £100—a sufficient evidence of the spirit which animates the members of the Association.

"The truly generous are the truly wise," and yet generosity is not a common virtue. It has been said that "one must be poor to know the luxury of giving," and it is certainly true that the gifts which are only possible at the cost of self-denial are those which give us most pleasure and satisfaction.

Let us then look around at this beginning of a new year and see in what directions our gifts are needed, and how we can best dispense them; gifts not of money alone but of tenderness, gentleness, kindness to the sick with whom we come in contact; gifts of expert knowledge which we can place at the disposal of Committees and Boards of Management dealing with Public Health Questions; gifts of speech and gifts of pen.

Especially is it vital to all professions that they should have an independent journal in the Press, and therefore those who support their professional organ financially, and by sending to it contributions on questions of general interest to their colleagues, expend their gifts wisely. "If there be first the willing mind" we shall find many directions in which to utilise gifts of heart and mind and brain and purse. Let us go forward into the New Year inspired by the determination that, be our gifts many or few, they shall be utilised to the best of our ability, for the benefit of the profession which we love and the public whom we serve.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)