

**THE**  
**BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING**  
WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
**THE NURSING RECORD**  
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,844

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 1914.

[Vol. LII.]

**EDITORIAL.**

**THE NEW YEAR.**

The New Year is a time of aspiration, and the aspirations of nurses are primarily for the profession of which they are members. There are many still in its ranks who remember when nursing was not seriously regarded as affording a means of livelihood for educated women, and consequently the practice of nursing fell far short of its possibilities. They have seen its ethical and practical standards raised to the most extraordinary extent by the efforts of the pioneers of modern nursing, who, possessed of a great compassion for the sick, and a high conception of the possible development of nursing transformed the care of the patients in the hospitals which they entered, and by the careful organization of nursing schools, and the training of cultured and educated women, whom they inspired with their own ideals, so raised the standard of nursing that to many people the trained nurse stood as a symbol of all that was noble and devoted.

The technique of nursing is still improving, and there are many women capable of as great devotion and heroism to be found in the ranks of nurses as in days gone by. But, unquestionably it does not at present stand as high in the estimation of the public as it did twenty years ago, and the problem for all nurses who care for their profession is not only how it can be once more raised to the position which it formerly held, but how its prestige can be maintained at an even higher level. For they know well that whenever there is any deterioration in the quality of nurses and the standard of nursing that the immediate sufferers are the sick.

To any one with an adequate conception of what sickness means such a result is

intolerable. To alleviate suffering and to assist in the cure of patients is the greatest happiness a nurse can know, and it is to accomplish this, and not from motives of aggrandisement, that nurses so insistently urge the enforcement of higher standards, better organization and high personal qualifications for members of their profession.

They see things as they are, falling far short of the ideal, falling away even from ideals already attained; and with great longing every nurse worthy of the name desires to see her profession purified, organized, raised to that perfection which she is confident it can attain, which it would attain, were it free to develop along natural lines without restriction.

To those who grieve over the present position of nursing, fearing yet greater deterioration, we say steadfastness in a righteous cause can accomplish miracles. The nursing profession contains within its own ranks the material for building up a magnificent organization, through which, in conjunction with the profession of medicine the prevention and cure of disease may approximate to perfection. No form of co-operation amongst nurses could be simpler than that indicated by the International Council of Nurses, which, taking the certificated nurses as the units, groups them into self-governing Leagues and Associations, federates these societies in a National Council, and affiliates all National Councils in the International Council of Nurses. This method has the advantage of simplicity combined with efficiency, and it is increasingly commending itself to the nursing profession.

Let our watchwords for the coming year be co-operation, solidarity, loyalty, courage. In the practice of these progress towards perfection is assured.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)