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## EDITORIAL.

### HONOUR.

"Had I stood aside . . . I should have sacrificed My honour and given to destruction the liberties of My Empire and of Mankind."

The message addressed by the King to the Governments and Peoples of his self-governing Dominions, will have been read by thousands of nurses Overseas, and it is well that we, the Nurses of the United Kingdom, should take to heart its great lesson—in the following solemn words:

"During the past few weeks, the peoples of My whole Empire at Home and Overseas have moved with one mind and purpose to confront and overthrow an unparalleled assault upon the continuity of civilization and the peace of mankind.

"The calamitous conflict is not of My seeking. My voice has been cast throughout on the side of peace. My Ministers earnestly strove to allay the causes of strife and to appease differences with which My Empire was not concerned. Had I stood aside when, in defiance of pledges to which My Kingdom was a party, the soil of Belgium was violated and her cities laid desolate, when the very life of the French nation was threatened with extinction, I should have sacrificed My honour and given to destruction the liberties of My Empire and of mankind. I rejoice that every part of the Empire is with me in this decision.

"Paramount regard for treaty faith and the pledged word of rulers and peoples is the common heritage of Great Britain and of the Empire."

Honour, a word so pregnant with meaning, and at this time so reminiscent of tragedy, is supposed to govern the moral lives of all individuals, all classes, and all Nations of a civilized world. We could not

well conceive of a state of social life without a code of honour to direct it. Be the code written or unwritten, it should remain sacredly inviolable. A sense of honour is a sense of truth and justice, and there is no profession upon which its laws are more binding than upon the profession of nursing, as its members come into such close touch with all the sorrows and secrets of mankind. The results of infringement of the sacred law of honour can be, and often are, disastrous; always disastrous to the character of the nurse, and may be without rectification to the individual, or cause.

A very solemn thought possesses the minds of all of us at this time of crisis, namely, that what we should have considered an almost impossible disaster has happened, because one nation has broken its word, violated its honour, and trampled on a Treaty which it swore to keep. Neither weakness nor thoughtlessness can be pleaded as an excuse. This nation acknowledges the pledges, yet—holds honour in so little esteem, that with fire and sword it consumes it utterly.

Thus the revered token of a solemn Treaty becomes "a scrap of paper," and the term "neutrality" which signifies an honourable peace, and upon which the awful calamity hangs—"a mere word."

In this solemn hour the King bids us take this thought to our comfort. We are at war, but for no ignoble motive.

We are at war to defend our very precious heritage of honour and the liberties of mankind, and we nurses, with the Empire at large, stand with our King in his paramount regard for treaty faith in things both great and small.

Of the valour and the heroism of our troops, who can tell of their splendour and their glory? Have they not proved themselves the very Soul of Honour?

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)