

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

No. 1,416.

SATURDAY, MAY 22, 1915.

Vol. LIV

EDITORIAL.

OUR HONOUR.

*"My honour and my life both grow in one,
Take honour from me, and my life is done."*

The Report of the Committee on alleged German outrages of which the Right Hon. Viscount Bryce, O.M., formerly British Ambassador at Washington, was chairman, is one of the most appalling documents ever issued as a Government Blue Book.

When hostilities were declared with Germany, in August last, there were many who believed that at least we were at war with a civilized nation, who would observe the recognized rules of warfare, and exempt non-combatants, so far as might be, from its effects. Then we heard charges, difficult to believe, against the German Army advancing through Belgium, of inhumanity and incredible savagery. But there is no longer any room for doubt. The report, with appendices, of Lord Bryce's Committee, directed "to consider and advise on the evidence collected on behalf of His Majesty's Government as to outrages alleged to have been committed by German troops during the present war," is such a terrible indictment that revolting as it is, it should be read by every man and woman in every civilized country in the world. Read moreover with the recollection that the Belgian people, men, women, and even infants, who have suffered martyrdom by mutilation, violation, crucifixion and other horrible crimes, have suffered lightly in comparison to the treatment which would be inflicted on those of British birth, if once the unspeakable fiends looting and slaying, under the blasphemous watchword "Gott mit uns" obtained a footing in these islands, which please God they never will.

The flame of righteous and burning indignation, which the evidence put forward by Lord Bryce's Committee will light from end

to end of the kingdom, must send every man of fighting age into the ranks of the Navy and Army, not only to avenge the wrongs of our Allies, but to protect British women. Is there a man in this country who will not at once prepare to fit himself for military service, when he hears of Belgian women violated by officers and soldiers in succession on tables in the public market place, and when he realizes that these things have been happening in places not so far from London as Edinburgh.

And if the mental torture of men has been intolerable—so intolerable as, in some cases, to deprive them of reason—in seeing their womankind, and their little children, at the mercy of these wild beasts, the sufferings of women represent the maximum which they can endure and live. Even their own physical degradation at the hands of an army lost to all sense of decency and shame, terrible as it is, does not represent their extremity of suffering. They have been compelled to witness the torture, mutilation, and murder of children of the tenderest years. Never since the days of Herod has such a ruthless and systematic massacre of the innocents taken place, and once more mothers are weeping for their children and refusing to be comforted.

The wrongs of womanhood outraged, bereaved, cry aloud for retribution, and British women, after reading the "Book of the Beast," must take steps to protect their own honour.

The Committee consider it proved (1) that in many parts of Belgium there were deliberate and systematically organized massacres of the civil population, (2) that women have been violated and children murdered, (3) that looting, house burning, and the wanton destruction of property were ordered and countenanced by the officers of the German Army, and (4) that women and children were used as a shield for advancing forces exposed to fire.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)