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EDITORIAL.

A GREAT MORAL ISSUE:

WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR.

As the War develops the grounds upon which we entered into it, and upon which it is being fought are increasingly comprehended, and they were well expressed by the Bishop of Pretoria in a sermon preached at the church of St. Martin's in the Fields on Sunday last.

The Bishop claimed that "we were fighting first and foremost for the sanctity of the word given, and we were suffering through the fact that we kept our word last year. We were fighting not for the material, but for the spiritual life of the Empire and of the world. A great moral issue hung in the balance to-day, and that alone made it worth while to undergo all this loss of life and suffering. . . . We were fighting against the spirit of evil let loose in a nation . . . It was going to be a big job, therefore the sooner it was begun the better it would be. It was only possible to win if the people at home were inspired by the same spirit as the men at the front."

The spirit which the Bishop found at the front during a month's visit there was that of the great surrender, unity of purpose, every one under orders, no one considering the things he possessed to be his own—all sharing their happiness in success, their sorrow in defeat.

It is because the War was not of our seeking, because like our heroic Belgian allies we entered into it, because honour demanded that we should keep our pledged word, that our sailors and soldiers are fighting to-day with a gallantry and heroism that are the admiration of the world. The only compulsion which impels them is the compulsion of a just cause in which they have profound faith, and, like the knight of

old, the British soldier to-day can sincerely say
"My strength is as the strength of ten]
Because my heart is pure."

The strongest incentive to achievement is the knowledge that we are at war to preserve everything that makes life worth living: honour—freedom—and spiritual, as opposed to material, life and ideals. It is to preserve these that the nation is ready to make every sacrifice.

The Bishop pointed out that the enemy were people of one purpose. They had made the great surrender, but they had made it on the wrong side. The lesson to be learnt here is that our surrender in the cause of right must be as complete, the spirit inspiring those at home no whit behind that dominating our brave troops.

So far as the nursing profession is concerned, we may claim that it is ready unreservedly to fulfil the duties imposed upon it with absolute self-surrender and devotion. It has given evidence of these qualities in the work of its members in military hospitals and hospital ships, at home and abroad, in the way in which nurses willingly risk and lay down their lives for their patients, in their coolness under fire, their courage when ships on which they are travelling are sunk by enemy craft. And more than this, the atmosphere they generate in hospitals where wounded men are received is precisely that which is most healing and helpful to those whose days have been passed in the nerve-racking atmosphere of war, and who physically and mentally need rest and recuperation.

The quiet, unostentatious, competent work of the women who have passed through years of preparation in hospitals and infirmaries may not at the present moment be fully realized, but when the history of the War comes to be written the page inscribed with the work of nurses will be a lustrous one.

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