

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

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

No. 1,447

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1915.

Vol. LV.

## PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE NURSING WORLD IN 1915.

The attention of the nursing world in 1915 has been concentrated on the work entailed upon it by the European War, and all organization work has been in suspense. The immediate needs of sick and wounded, of refugees, of all upon whom the war presses so heavily, have engrossed the attention of trained nurses.

One of the conspicuous features of the year has been the patriotism and devotion shown by the nurses of our Overseas Dominions. Whenever opportunity has offered, their services have been at the disposal of the Empire, as have those of the men of the fighting forces. The Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the South African Union, the Dominion of New Zealand, all have sent, and sent without cost to the Mother Country, hundreds of well-trained nurses, to share in the work of their colleagues at home, and many hundreds more are still available, should the call be made upon them.

Not only have our own Dominions sent trained nurses to our assistance. Our Allies in Japan have sent from the Flowery Kingdom a contingent whose great services have been recently recognized by His Majesty the King, as we record in another column. The American Red Cross Society, and the University of Harvard, U.S.A., and Norway, whose Queen is British, have also sent well-trained contingents.

While so many nurses, with excellent certificates, are available for the care of the sick and wounded, there is no excuse for employing persons with lower qualifications in responsible charge of them. Their adequate care is an obligation of first importance, and nothing can dispense the nation from its provision.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRAINED NURSES OF  
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

The National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland has, according to its

custom, kept in touch with the questions of the day, and from the outbreak of the war saw with increasing anxiety that, while the services of many trained nurses placed at the disposal of the War Office and the British Red Cross Society were rejected, those of women with a few weeks' hospital experience were being utilized.

Moreover, except through the Regular Military Nursing Services, when trained nurses have been employed, as in Military Auxiliary Hospitals, it has been in a subordinate position, in their own department, to lay officials, who know nothing of the science of nursing, and therefore their work has been done under great difficulties. This situation has arisen primarily from the organization of Voluntary Aid Detachments outlined and sanctioned by the War Office, and from the further assumption that those who lend their houses, or give sums of money for the care of the wounded, have the right to supervise the work of a highly skilled profession, a totally unwarranted assumption which would not, for a moment, be tolerated by the medical profession, and which is inimical to the best interests of our wounded soldiers. The axiom that the control of a profession should be in the hands of members of that profession is laid down in the interests of the public.

The National Council of Trained Nurses constitutionally approached the War Office on this subject, and on December 31st, 1914, the President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, sent to the Secretary of State for War a Resolution, passed by the Council, recording its unqualified disapproval of the present organization of the nursing of the sick and wounded soldiers in military auxiliary hospitals at home and abroad, and earnestly petitioning the Secretary of State for War to "prevent the expenditure of the munificent subscriptions of the public on inefficient nursing, and the subjection of the sick and wounded to the dangerous interference of untrained and unskilled women who have been placed in positions of responsibility for which they are not qualified." The Resolution was

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)