

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,500.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1916.

Vol. LVII.

PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE NURSING WORLD IN 1916.

During the year which is now closing, the attention of the nursing profession has been mainly concentrated upon its great national duty in connection with the care of sick and wounded sailors and soldiers—the alleviation of their sufferings and their restoration to health—and upon the question of legislation providing for their registration by the State. That the latter question has not remained in abeyance, leaving the whole nursing profession free to devote their whole energies to the necessity of the hour, is due, as our readers are aware, to the proposal for the establishment of a College of Nursing, to include the control of a voluntary Register of Nurses, by the Hon. Arthur Stanley, M.P.

THE HEROISM OF NURSES.

In the midst of all the horrors of war it is a relief to turn for a moment to another side of the picture—the devotion and heroism of trained nurses. Whether their courage and discipline have been tested on torpedoed ships, under fire in bombarded towns, amidst the hardships of the Great Trek over the Serbian mountains in mid-winter, in fever hospitals, subjected to the risk of contracting from their patients the dread disease of cerebro-spinal meningitis, or—as in the case of one nurse working in a military hospital—in assisting a constable to control three violent prisoners, while a number of men refused to help, the behaviour of the trained nurses of the Empire, under conditions testing their endurance and self-sacrifice to the utmost, has been such as to win the highest admiration.

The words of the nursing staff on the sinking hospital ship *Anglia*, "We have the right to be last this time," are worthy of a place in history with those of the *Marquette* nurses, "Fighting men first"; and nearer home, when the streets of Dublin were swept with gunfire, the nurses went about their work reso-

lutely, so as to draw from General Sir John Maxwell the commendation:—

"I desire to express my sincere appreciation of the services rendered during the recent disturbances in Dublin by the medical, surgical, and nursing staff of many of the city hospitals, and, in particular, of the gallantry shown by those nurses who exposed themselves to a heavy fire in attending to, and removing, the wounded."

In the words of Colonel Springthorpe, of Melbourne:—"The work of the nurses has been magnificent. . . . The women's sacrifice has been as great as the men's, and in many cases the danger has been very little less. The work they have done deserves the everlasting thanks of the community." If this is the case where nurses, outside the regular naval and military nursing services, had to work at such a disadvantage, had trained nurses been able to organize their own professional work before the war—a right for which we have pleaded for nearly thirty years—how magnificent might the result have been. Is it too much to hope that the lesson of the war to the Government will be that trained nurses have the capacity to organize their own work, and that, for the welfare of all concerned, such organization should be placed in their hands?

CAVELL MEMORIALS.

The execution of Miss Edith Cavell has profoundly stirred not only the British Empire, but nations beyond its confines, and a number of memorials have been erected to her memory. The sentiment which has been evoked was eloquently voiced by M. Léon Baylet in an address delivered in her honour at the Atheneum Municipal, Bordeaux, when he said:—

"With hearts constricted with an inexpressible emotion which causes our speech to falter, we come to glorify a woman—an Englishwoman—an English nurse, whose simple straightforward life, clear as a radiant spring day, was passed at the bedside of the sick, in the tenements of the poor, a woman

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)