

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

No. 1,567.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1918.

Vol. LX.

EDITORIAL.

FOR FREEDOM AND HONOUR.

Joy for those whose laurel,
Won in righteous quarrel,
Is our theme and pride to-day.

As we go to press the Memorial Service for the members of the nursing profession, and of voluntary aid detachments, who have fallen in the war, is being held in St. Paul's Cathedral, on April 10th, with every honour and circumstance.

It is no new thing that nurses should risk their lives in the service of the sick: Year in, year out, they fearlessly expose themselves in hospital and infirmary wards, and in the homes of rich and poor, to deadly diseases of all kinds; and if comparatively few succumb to them it is because of the careful technique they practise, not because the risks that they run are inconsiderable.

In previous wars trained nurses have always been eager to place their services at the disposal of the wounded, and Lord French has told us that in an Egyptian campaign when the Soudan was a seething mass of fanatic dervishes to fall into whose hands meant death and torture, even to a man, the nurses used to accompany the Forces, under burning suns, up to the very border line of imminent danger, and they were only prevented by the most peremptory orders from running terrible risks of death.

But, up to the present, when nations claiming to be civilized have been at war, nurses have received all the protection possible from both belligerents; the risks that they incurred were unavoidable.

In this war a new element has been introduced. It is the deliberate policy of a ruthless and shameless enemy to murder non-combatants, to regard the symbol of the Red Cross as a convenient target for his

guns, and to sink at sight hospital ships carrying sick and wounded.

Wherefore a new note has sounded in the quality of the service of nurses. If the enemy elects to make war on women, whose only concern in the danger zone is to mitigate the horrors of war for both friend and foe, when incapacitated by wounds and sickness, then British nurses bid him do his worst. They refuse to quit the bedside of their patients, and in hospitals riddled with shot and shell and filled with poison gas, in ships for which the enemy lays wait with the deadly torpedo which may send them in a few moments to the bottom of the sea, resolute and undaunted they serve, with the same readiness that they expose themselves to the infection of typhus, cholera, or plague.

So it comes to pass that the Roll of Honour of the nurses who have died during the war includes many who have been drowned, killed, and died of wounds, as well as those who have died of disease; and that other, whose life and death have already been commemorated with all honour at St. Paul's, Edith Cavell, executed at dawn by a volley of German rifles, who died, as she lived, with malice towards none, with charity towards all.

Therefore a vast congregation, including the highest and the humblest in the land, is assembling in the Metropolitan Cathedral, and when our children, and our children's children, ask us "What mean ye by this service?" we will tell them stories of the high courage of the nurses who did their duty faithfully in the Great War, and who, in common with our brave men, laid down their lives for freedom and honour.

Christ the Shepherd good, befriend them,
Who gave His life their souls to win;
'Tis even He that shall defend them
Their going out and coming in.

May Light perpetual shine upon them.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)