

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

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

No. 1,689.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 1920.

Vol. LXV

## EDITORIAL.

### THE NEW STATUS.

Few will deny that the work—the glorious work—of reconstructing the vast devastated area of our shattered civilisation is open to all; all are eligible, without any distinction of sex or other artificial barrier. The thinkers, the talkers (in the best sense) and the doers, can all—if they will—make contributions to the great architectural scheme. We can, if we will, make the well-worn phrase, “a new Heaven and a new Earth” mean something real and true. But—and it is a great but—we must have a great strong operative principle to guide us. Very much could be said on this point, but we will confine ourselves to our own department of it, namely, the new status in the nursing world.

A new day has dawned for us, a new life has begun. December 23, 1919, gave birth to the profession of nursing in the United Kingdom. Before that date, nursing the sick—whether by the trained or untrained—was a mere occupation. All nurses would do well to ponder over this and ask themselves (or others) what it really means. Those who are indifferent to a matter which is going to affect their profession so vitally, must surely lack both insight and enthusiasm, and those who are lacking in enthusiasm “have no health in them.” We had the honour and privilege of being in the House of Lords on the day mentioned above when the Bills for the State Registration of Nurses (a) England and Wales, (b) Scotland, (c) Ireland, received the Royal Assent, and were forthwith placed upon the Statute Book. We are aware that the regular readers of this journal know how vitally this legislation affects them, but we mention it in the hope that it will

reach the eye and the mind of some who do not know it. We have had a recent opportunity of speaking to very many nurses upon this important matter, and we have felt amazed to find that there are nurses who do not realise the dignity and value of the new position. The victory now gained is the result of a campaign lasting over thirty years. The new legal status of the nursing profession will bring great changes; with privileges come responsibilities, and if those nurses who are going to reap where others have sown do not rise to them and “march breast forward” they will be left far behind.

There are many vistas opening up before the nurse of to-day, and the nurse of the future, not only in the care of the sick but in preventive work. The prison doors are swinging open to admit her to minister to the minds and bodies of their occupants; her services are in demand in the male wards of mental hospitals, and in many other branches. But from whatever branch the call comes, the quality needed is the same—the best.

The registered nurses of the future should be students of nursing history, and conversant with the modern reform movement—those, in fact, who are possessed of the spirit of Nursing, the spirit of Understanding, the spirit of Health—good citizens likely to be of valuable service to the community. Such nurses will be the towers of strength needed to consolidate the profession; they will be best fitted to pass on the torch of light and learning to posterity. Such women, repositories of all that is best and noblest in nursing will be at once the hope and the glory of our beloved profession. We believe that a new and better time is coming, not for the members of the nursing profession only, but for the sick and the whole.

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