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EDITORIAL.

AN IMPULSE FOR A NEW ERA.

In the works of Goethe one comes across arguments against the theory that there are no sudden leaps forward in evolution, against the theory that evolution is a gradual process and that all the laws of nature are opposed to anything but a kind of rythmical, steady change and growth. In his "Metamorphoses of Plants," however, this great seer, poet and scientist proves that nature does, at times, proceed, by a leap forward, and he instances the sudden change of form from the first leaf of the seedling into that form which its ordinary foliage takes, then again the sudden change to petal, to stamen, and so forth. No doubt the views of Goethe on the plant world involve some amount of scientific controversy, but this does not affect the truth we would illustrate that, in all periods of civilisation, impulses arise at intervals which change the whole course of evolution and also that, into the separate departments of life, such impulses come and bring about changes that otherwise it would take years to produce. If we take the trouble to look beneath the surface of materialistic history do we not find in religion, in art, in literature, in science, in politics, these impulses of destiny? Sometimes, it would appear that they arrive spontaneously, sometimes as the blossoming of life-long striving on the part of individuals. The poet tells us:—

"There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

What is true of the individual is also true of the community. Events that take place that are rich with opportunity and, all that is required, to turn the wheels of the car of destiny, is a sufficient number of people possessed of enthusiasm, determination and altruism, people who have it in them to lift the threads and weave into the future, with sufficient sense of responsibility, sufficient courage, to become *creators* of the future.

One whose mind was very rich in mystical thought has defined the relationship of the present to the far distant future in the concept that Time becomes Space, expressive, in one of its aspects, of the idea that, in distant ages, people more and more tend to look back on the past as on a kind of panorama, and that time is, as it were, expressed or illustrated by the creative fruits of its passing, for instance, by various outstanding deeds and achievements of mankind.

Some of us see reason to hope that the Fellows and

Members on "Diploma Day" laid the foundations of an edifice which will rise into the future, and will be a lasting one still when Time has become Space, and the future generations of nurses look back on the panorama of professional history. Yet, to the average mind, the events of that day might seem but the logical outcome of the Acts which established a minimum standard of education for nurses, such certainly would have been the ordinary point of view of any other profession which had not had to combat so many reactionary influences, so much opposition to the principles of self-government and so many problems in the field of economics. But if, in December, 1919, we had been able to "look into the seeds of time," and visualise the 29th of April, 1927, to some of us, it might have appeared but the fabric of a dream. Even now there may be those who say that the enthusiasm which characterised this first meeting of The British College of Nurses emanated purely from the appeal to the feelings which ceremonial and a great and generous gift can make. Well, if there are some disposed to this point of view, it matters not, for no amount of pessimism, no discouragement, can blur the fact that the nurses present recognised opportunity, recognised responsibility, and were determined to make the transitory permanent, and to continue the impulse of Diploma Day. Its aspirations, its inspiration and the traditions these ensoul will be lasting as other and similar movements in kindred professions.

Everyone, who is a "freeman" in her profession, should realise this, and throw the powers of thought, feeling, and will into the new impulse, so that it may flow on with a force strong enough to transform the profession from its Cinderella-like attitude to one that stands abreast of world progress. What all should grasp is that conception of responsibility. Money may be a tremendous force for good or for evil, at least in the present age, and it lies with the nurses to make their "Gift" one or the other, they must see visions and dream dreams, and give an impulse to a New Era.

In the Presidential Address there was a reference to those "witnesses" whose names stand on the Diplomas, each one of whom has given her impulse to progress. And when we, in the present age, look back into that Time which has become Space we may see others, weavers in the world process, builders in time. May the nurses of the present pass on an impulse too, one fitted to their time, one towards a higher educational and professional development, and thereby to a greater ability to develop the glorious traditions of service that stand unfolded by our "witnesses" when Time has become Space.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)