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## EDITORIAL.

### NEW YEAR GIFTS.

*"The duty of the good man is to endeavour to put more into the common stock than he has taken out of it."*—DEAN INGE.

The New Year is a time for gift making—freely and generously—and members of the Nursing Profession may well apply this impulse to their own rule of life, and consider how they may order it, so that they may put into the common stock more than they have taken out of it, since that is the duty of all good men.

What we have received from our profession we know well—a congenial means of self support, our power to serve and help humanity, our friendships, our happiness in life. Surely gratitude impels us to give something in return.

To that increasing body of Fellows and Members of the British College of Nurses the solemn Obligation taken by each one when she signs the College Roll implies the offering of gifts. She declares: "I will always, as a Registered Nurse, fulfil to the best of my power and ability, and without any selfish consideration, every duty entrusted to me in the nursing of the sick; I will in every way loyally perform my professional duties to the medical practitioners under whose directions I shall work; I will always regard as a sacred confidence, and will most strictly refrain from repeating or divulging to any one, any private facts or personal information concerning my patients, their relations, or their friends, which may be communicated to me."

A high sense of duty, loyalty, honour. Good gifts to bring to any profession.

As a resolution for the New Year, shall we apply them to our professional organ, THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, endeavour to increase its influence, to obtain new subscribers and advertisers, and to support the latter when obtained? A free organ in the Press is the life-blood of every profession, and no sacrifice we can make to secure it is too great.

### THE VOTE COVERS ALL.

The meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales on December 16th was the last of the Council appointed and elected in 1923 for a term of five years, and the principal interest centred on the announcement of the election of the new Council—the first open election of Direct Representatives of the Registered Nurses on the General Part of the Register—which was made by the Returning Officer, Mr. James Wilson. We may say, at once, that the way in which the Election was conducted was businesslike and efficient, and every-

one was pleased and satisfied. It was in striking contrast to the last Election, which had to be cancelled and a second ballot taken, as the statutory regulations governing the Election had not been conformed with.

When we come to study the Election *results* these cannot be considered satisfactory. The right of an open Election was won for the Nurses on the General Part of the Register after the question had been considered by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, secured at the instance of the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council, after a considerable expenditure of time, personal service, and money. The evidence given in its support by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Miss E. S. Innes, and others, was so conclusive, that in spite of the opposition of the representative of the Ministry of Health, and the Chairman of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales (Sir Wilmot Herringham), the Select Committee unanimously recommended to Parliament that "at the next Election the restrictions on voting should be removed, and that the eleven places allotted to nurses on the General Part of the Register should be thrown open to any nurse registered on the General Part of the Register."

This privilege having been won, how has it been used? The Returning Officer reported that the total electorate for the General Part of the Register was 42,568, and that the total number of Voting Papers received from nurses on this Part of the Register was 18,153, of which 17,893 were valid. Surely a most disappointing result.

Other points in relation to the Election were that: (1) Two influential Associations of Matrons and the College of Nursing, Ltd. (whose Council includes influential members of the laity and the medical profession) entered into a combine to nominate and promote the election of certain candidates, their propaganda being largely financed by Annie, Viscountess Cowdray. They were thus able to circularise the whole electorate, a very considerable expense, far beyond the means of independent candidates.

To endeavour to influence the votes of nurses who depend largely upon them for professional promotion is an unethical procedure which we hope these Matrons will ultimately recognise as such, and will maintain a strict neutrality; but the majority have evidently not yet attained such an altruistic outlook.

(2) Registered Nurses will do well to note that in this Election, as in the last, in connection with the Supplementary Parts of the Register, over the Electorates of which the College of Nursing, Ltd. and its allied Associations of Matrons have little effective influence, an independent candidate was elected in each case. It is a lesson in nursing politics of which the importance should be borne in mind.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)