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## EDITORIAL.

### THE CODEX SINAITICUS.

#### A PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

Is there any Christian person in this country who has heard without a thrill of emotion of the opportunity afforded to the British Museum for the acquisition of the great Codex Sinaiticus of the Greek Bible, one of the most famous and valuable books in the world?

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Prime Minister, and other influential signatories in a letter to the press state that "an agreement has been entered into with the Government of the U.S.S.R. to purchase the manuscript for £100,000, and the Book has already arrived in this country.

"The negotiation has had the cordial support of His Majesty's Government, who have undertaken to make a special contribution towards the purchase price of one pound for every pound subscribed by the public. It remains therefore to raise £50,000 by an appeal to private munificence."

The Codex Sinaiticus "dates from about A.D. 350 and contains the whole of the New Testament, with the non-canonical Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas, and about two-fifths of the Old Testament. It and the Codex Vaticanus may be described as the primary authorities for the true text of our Bible."

It was in 1844 that Constantine Tischendorf discovered in the convent of St. Catherine at the foot of Mount Sinai part of the precious volume, but could not get the authorities to yield up the remainder. After periods of uncertainty and suspense, however, he at last secured this splendid Biblical treasure for Alexander II, Tsar of Russia, who had patronised and financed his researches, and the manuscript has been treasured in Russia from that time until the end of last year.

That Great Britain should be the custodian of this precious manuscript, a pearl of great price, is specially appropriate, for it has always had a peculiar reverence for the Holy Scriptures.

The precious manuscript is now securely housed in our national treasure house. It should be a matter of national pride to secure so rare a treasure, and the measure of the national devotion to the Holy Book, described by Queen Victoria as "the secret of England's greatness" should be demonstrated by the generosity with which the required amount is speedily subscribed.

#### "WHAT I HAVE I HOLD."

Most of us, as the last page of the old year is turned, realise, with a sigh, that our attainments have fallen short of the hopes with which we entered upon it

twelve months ago, and as we stretch out our hands to receive the spotless pages of the unknown future, we breathe a hope that they may be inscribed with the record of some worthy deed. As we make this gesture, and consider in what direction duty points the way, there must surely come before us with pre-eminent insistence our responsibility as nurses, individually and collectively, to guard the professional privileges already won with so much self-sacrifice and devotion by those who have gone before, by those still with us who have fought the good fight for the standardisation of nursing education, the organisation of nurses through State Registration, and all which that implies; and for self-government for the Nursing Profession through their elected representatives on their Governing Bodies, the General Nursing Councils, who are in a majority of practically two-thirds to one-third.

Yet it is well from time to time to call to mind the days of disorganisation, and of the continuous endeavour on the part of a section of trained nurses to bring order into our ranks, before the Nurses' Registration Acts were placed upon the Statute Book. Five generations of probationers have entered our Nurse-Training Schools since that time, accepting the established order as a matter of course, and the method by which this was attained grows dim, except to the limited number who are students of nursing history.

The amazing opposition to an effective measure of self-government for nurses, the anxious insistence upon it, the final triumph, are becoming memories as dim as those of the Great War to the present generation. Yet it is imperative that the younger nurses should study the history of the past, so that privileges so hardily won for them may not be lost. Quite recently, they have had an object lesson of the perils which may be encountered, in the endeavour to break down the one portal system of entrance to the Nursing Profession by the admission of school girls, after instruction by lay teachers, to the first part of the State Preliminary Examination before entering a hospital—an examination at present only open to probationers who have had at least a year's hospital training and theoretical instruction in relation to their work by Sister-Tutors who are trained nurses.

The importance and power of the nursing-electorate in placing on the General Nursing Council for England and Wales a sufficient number of representatives pledged to turn down this proposition is a forcible example both of the dangers still to be encountered and of the power entrusted to the electorate, to be held by it as a sacred trust, and handed on unimpaired to its successors.

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