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EDITORIAL.

And because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.

This issue of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING carries the good wishes of the Editor to all its readers near and far in the five continents of the globe. We know not what the year may bring forth, but this we do know that it will make fresh demands upon our energy, our courage and resourcefulness, demands which we hope every member of the profession will be prepared to meet, for by solidarity we can best impress the public with the reasonableness of our expert views, and so obtain its support for reforms which we believe to be necessary not only from the professional but also from the public standpoint.

Two important matters will demand the attention of the profession in the near future. The Report of the Select Committee on Nursing for England and Wales, which after being in consultation for a year, is, it is stated, to be issued at an early date, and consideration by a special sub-committee of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain of amendments to its Constitution in certain particulars, and which is to report to the Executive Committee.

How carefully any change in the Constitution of our National Council must be considered it is superfluous to emphasise. Founded on the principle of self determination as demanded by the International Council of Nurses to which it is affiliated, no departure from this basic principle will be in order.

We await the Report of the Select Committee on Nursing with interest, but without great hope that its deliberations will produce the result in attracting into the nursing profession a much larger number of candidates of the quality which is desirable.

We base our belief on the meagre proportion of Registered Nurses on the Committee concerned mainly with the recruitment of nurses, and its overweight by members of the laity. We hold, if useful results are to be secured, that Registered Nurses themselves nominated by their self-governing societies should have been in a majority on this Committee because they only know what will popularise the service and attract desirable candidates to its ranks. Adequate representation was denied them. Secondly, because the average person considers that high salaries and the relaxation of discipline will achieve the desired end, but neither of these will suffice. What is needed is to set the life of a nurse out in its true colours, not denying that it is

a hard life, that it demands self denial, concentration, sympathy, fortitude. There are qualities in the desirable type of girl which will respond to this demand. She will realise that these are indeed the qualities needed by the nurses who care for sick and suffering humanity, and with their exercise, as the years go by a nurse will realise also that her chosen vocation is a happy, self-satisfying life, and that she would not willingly change it for any other, and by the manifest happiness which she exhibits, she will induce others like minded to enter the profession she herself has chosen.

The consideration of Revision of the Constitution of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain is the second important task which confronts Registered Nurses in this country—must be undertaken by those who know its history, who realise the creative faculty which inspired its organisation and also the far-reaching influence it has exercised in its association with other national bodies, and the leading part it has played in the progress of the International Council of Nurses. The measure of its usefulness and success was amply apparent in its professional and financial organisation of the Great International Congress of Nurses in London in 1937; and let us remember to stand firm for the principles upon which the Council was founded. Self government, decentralisation, direct and sufficient representation of minorities, the evolution of the individual and the demand for liberty of conscience and command of one's own soul.

Under the shadow of Christmas and the benediction that it brings we look forward to the New Year. And as we stand at the parting of the ways and look back for a moment over the past year the dominant note is one of thankfulness to God that Christmas found us still enjoying the blessing of peace. Let us hope also that the National conscience has been aroused and that during the anxious week of the Crisis we realised that all was not well with us—so long as strife, persecution and mutilated death is the fate of fellow human beings—that self-protection is not enough.

The question is, How can the Nursing Profession offer its utmost of service to the World at large? The physical and mental strain which attendance on the sick entails leaves little spontaneous energy for outside work, and again those Nurses who are wise realise that the sexes have their respective spheres, in which both the man and the woman excel, and which should not be forgotten by either—Father and Mother we are. Let the one offer its creative faculty and physical strength, the other intuition, pity, grace and practical efficiency.

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