

Royal British Nurses' Association.

Incorporated by



Royal Charter.

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

PROGRESS.

We receive many letters at the present time dealing with difficulties that arise owing to existing conditions and the hardships and confusion incident to the effort to "carry on as usual." In many of these letters, there is a note of pessimism, and the feeling is expressed that "progress is at a standstill," an expression not so self-contradictory as at first it might appear. We are not referring so much to those of our correspondents who have gone off to undertake military nursing or who are still at work in the large general hospitals, but rather to those others who are engaged in certain branches of public health work or in institutions concerned with branches of nursing and special work relating to the welfare of the public, nurses, in fact, who have decided that the best service they can give to their country is to "carry on as usual," although inclination may direct otherwise; and in the light of facts, it is not in the least surprising, in many instances, that they grow discouraged.

It might be helpful to consider just what is meant by progress in these days when the use of that word may seem to many to be an anachronism. The word has a double meaning, and so it is often used very loosely. Progress can imply a going forward, a development in accordance with moral evolution, or it can imply nothing more than mere movement and change, and the last, in times such as these, is as often retrogressive as progressive; for instance, to take an example near at home, we might again refer to the extent to which women with fifty hours of training, and others with more but still very inadequate experience, have been mustered and organised in large numbers to care for the wounded soldiers or injured civilians. A glance at the extent to which these have been brought together to meet the situation and achieve "preparedness" might easily be taken for progress by the uninitiated; it is "progress" merely in the sense of movement and in reality retrogressive and dangerous.

Progress judged from physical values may prove to be its exact opposite when judged from spiritual aspects or from the perspective that time will give to it; while what seems like failure may, under the same aspects, show itself as attainment, and may, indeed, in a spiritual sense, be high victory. Progress in a machine age may rest too often on political or bureaucratic machinery and, in many respects, we can see that what is regarded as progress is but degeneracy and a falling backwards. Take the great and noble word Science. The vast field of its activity and discovery, is it not, now almost wholly directed to bringing about destruction? Yet we speak of the progress of science!

But it is not necessary to grow pessimistic about progress, only one must look far beyond that which is just immediately present to what is there also as stimulating and good in a spiritual or cultural sense. Witness, for instance, how—at the present time—injustice and wrong has taken hold of youth and "stabbed its spirit broad awake," to go out

like the Crusaders of old to fight for Christianity and civilisation. It has drawn into activity the splendour of courage of British manhood; and the nurses have shown no less awakeness, judging from the first reactions of the declaration of war, when the vast majority thought no more of work that was easier and often more remunerative, but offered themselves to one branch of the Services or another.

But to those who hold the forts of progress, won in peace time, we can but point out that the well-being of humanity and its health are still parts of our defences. All cannot be in the front line and many are doing perhaps the heavier tasks in combating the difficulties and confusion that must arise in times of supreme national emergency. But don't let us lose hope and speak of "waste of time" and "no progress," but seek to transform evil into good, to maintain the added effort required to build up the defences, to promote and safeguard the health of the nation, and so play no unimportant a task in maintaining the defences of the nation.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

The Executive Committee will shortly have in preparation the list of Members for election as Members of the General Council, as provided for in Bye-Law XVII.

We shall be glad to receive from members before March 25th the names of any Members of the Association whom they would like to see placed on the balloting lists.

REVIEW.

A fertile imagination is a useful adjunct to penmanship when it comes to literary output, and Miss Morrison's enables her to produce one book after another with an astonishing rapidity and apparent ease that is enviable. For her latest novel she has chosen an exhilarating subject, for she sends her heroine, who, by the way, is described as a State Registered Nurse, on a long series of flying adventures, and attaches to these a pretty love story.

"Flying High," by Margaret Morrison, S.R.N., M.R.B.N.A. (Published by Messrs. Hutchinson, price 10s. 6d.).

OBITUARY.

It is with sincere regret that we have received intimation of the death of Miss Bertha Lancaster, of 29, Wimpole Street, who was a member of the Association for many years. Most deeply do we sympathise with her Nursing Staff, for to them she was a generous and most considerate employer and a very real friend, as is evidenced by the fact that many members of it have been with her almost from the date when she took over the home.

Generous alike to her staff and to her profession, Miss Lancaster was especially so to those members of the latter who were met by adverse circumstances and illness. For many years she was one of the most generous subscribers to the Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund.

194, Queen's Gate,
London, S.W.7.

ISABEL MACDONALD,
Secretary to the Corporation.

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