

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
THE NURSING RECORD

ETHEL GORDON FENWICK, S.R.N., HON. EDITOR 1888—1947.

No. 2198. Vol. 99.

OCTOBER, 1951.

Price Sevenpence.

FOR many months the ill-health of the King has evoked great and wide sympathy, and the knowledge that His Majesty had undergone the very serious lung operation on Sunday, September 23rd, sent a wave of deep concern throughout the world for his suffering.

In their grave anxiety, our thoughts go out to the Queen, the Princesses, Queen Mary and other members of the Royal Family, with our fervent prayers for our Sovereign's recovery.

It is at this time of suspense that we doubly realise how much our country and the nations of the world owe to His Majesty's personal influence for the betterment of humanity.

We pray that the Doctors and Nurses in their high calling, so honoured, may be blessed in their contribution of supreme skill, and bring our revered King, happy, healthful years to come.

A. S. B.

## Editorial.

### The Beauty that is Nursing.

NO ONE YET HAS SUCCESSFULLY or clearly defined Nursing to everyone else's satisfaction. In its highest form Nursing may be a vocation, a profession, a science or an art, whilst in its more elementary exposition, it may be a practical and domestic means of earning a livelihood.

Similarly, Nurses themselves differ greatly one from another. Some are lavishly endowed intellectually and highly accomplished as were Florence Nightingale and the late Mrs. Ethel Gordon Fenwick, not to mention many other brilliant and gifted nurses active today. Whereas others, less startlingly gifted, yet who make up the rank and file of our profession are priceless to the common weal, and the country could not get along without them.

Yet, whatever the individual talent, whether one is a great reformer or an inconspicuous young nurse busily engaged in her daily tasks, each one carries within herself a great treasure. Each one, according to her capabilities and intention may glorify or destroy that treasure, the Beauty that is Nursing.

What then is this Beauty? It is the assurance that, whether conscious of the fact or not, Nursing is a blessed work. Whether it is a vocation or not, Nursing is certainly God's work, and as such the rewards are certain and incorruptible. High wages and a luxurious code of life were never promised as rewards to those carrying on this great work, but the rewards of "I was sick, and ye visited Me," and of "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these My Brethren," are eternal rewards, and how joyfully and gladly shall we receive them when the real Appointed Day dawns!

In these times of collective bargaining, when groups of individuals bound together in identical trades and professions, meet for the purpose of bettering their living conditions, shortening their hours of work and demanding increased weekly wages, one is neither surprised nor yet critical of their actions. Their work is not sufficiently enthralling, nor so vital to the community as is Nursing. Not for them is the glory and satisfaction of helping to wrest a sick child from the jaws of death,

nor to bind up broken and bleeding limbs, nor to soothe the pain of others in their weakness. They must earn money to buy their satisfaction and feeling of well-being. Ours is in our daily work.

Strangely enough, when Nurses get together within their Organisations demanding higher salaries, shorter hours, longer holidays, free shoes and stockings and expenses for various outings—one still feels slightly uncomfortable and a little shocked! Admittedly the shocks get weaker as time goes on, and one gradually becomes hardened, but the fact of the shock being experienced at all—is a pointer not to be disregarded.

It must be frankly admitted that Nurses really need good working conditions, sufficient free time for recreation and social contacts and they *must* have a salary which confers a decent standard of living. Their health too must be adequately guarded. Having conceded all this, we still maintain that Nursing is *different* from all other forms of occupation and it cannot conduct its affairs in exactly the same way as do other professions and trades.

Therefore it follows that because Hospital administrators, engineers or laundry workers (to mention but a few) demand expenses to their Annual General Meetings or ask for special footwear or protective clothing—we need not necessarily do likewise. By refraining from such actions we, as a profession, are in no danger of being overlooked, for the Minister of Health has more than once publicly acknowledged his indebtedness to us. Regional Hospital Boards are well aware of the importance of our Organisations and fully realise that we have much to contribute to the National Health Service.

It is common knowledge that the Minister is scraping the bottom of the barrel in his endeavours to find the necessary monies for the Hospitals. We ourselves know that because of financial difficulties, our patients are being given cheaper medicines, pills and drugs than before. We know also that dressings, bed-linen and blankets are painfully expensive items, costing nearly five times as much as they did even five years ago. Soon these necessities may become priceless, and therefore unobtainable. For these reasons alone and many others, plainly discernible to those with eyes to see, we should cease, for the time being, making further demands

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)