

Editorial Comment

Source: *The American Journal of Nursing*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Dec., 1918), pp. 153-158

Published by: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3406193>

Accessed: 16-10-2017 04:41 UTC

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THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

VOL. XIX

DECEMBER, 1918

No. 3

EDITORIAL COMMENT

CHRISTMAS AND THE NATIONS AT PEACE

Never, since the angels sang their joyous hymn of peace over the Bethlehem manger, has the word "peace" contained the significance it bears to-day. A world worn and weary beyond expression is to-day looking toward the fulfillment of peace. Truly, the echo of that first Christmas peace which comes down to us through the ages will find a more fervent response in our hearts this year than ever before.

There are some deluded ones who believe that reconciliation could have been effected without conflict or pain, but they have no precedent for this. The One who gave to the world the greatest reconciliation it has ever known, accomplished it only through the agony of the cross, and can we do less in bringing back righteousness and justice and peace to the earth again?

Our rejoicing, our peace on the earth, will be mingled with very tender thoughts at this season, of those nurses and soldiers who have so willingly and joyfully made the supreme sacrifice, for they have not died in vain, they have accomplished that for which they gave their lives, the betterment of the world.

Never has mankind been so well prepared to appreciate the blessings of peace as now. Few in this land knew what war meant; few in the whole world knew how horrible war could be until this four-year object lesson taught them. Christmas has a deeper meaning and a deeper joy than at any other time.

When the premature news of the signing of the armistice was received, the long tension gave way and a tide of relief, joy, and surprise expressed itself in one great spontaneous celebration which showed what the strain had been. It was well that there was an outlet for this first enthusiasm, so that the authentic news might be more fittingly celebrated.

After all this mad rejoicing by what seemed to be the irresponsible classes, in a most wonderful demonstration of noise, marching bands, street parades, etc., there came to thoughtful people

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a realization of the awful destruction of life, the broken homes, the poverty, the loss of joyous childhood, and the years which must be spent in reclamation. All talk about indemnity and compensation, but emphasizes the fact that for the greater losses of the war there can be no reparation, no indemnity. Historic buildings and works of art can never be duplicated; despoiled libraries cannot be exactly replaced; the pictures of horror cannot be wiped from the minds that hold them; the bloom of innocent happy childhood cannot be put back; the purity torn from many a young girl, cannot be restored to her; the dead cannot be brought to life. Yet we believe that on the ruins of this imperfect civilization a new and better state of society will be raised; that reforms which would have taken years to bring about, have been hastened; that nations will stand shoulder to shoulder as never before; that a new feeling of brotherhood is astir in the world.

The great question now before us is, How is nursing as a profession to use to best advantage the lessons the war has taught? The part of the nurse has been a vital one during the conflict, the call for her has been insistent and she has responded to it whole-heartedly. We congratulate those whose privilege it has been to take an active part in it, whether in foreign fields, in the cantonments in this country, or those who have only been able to serve by doing the essential work at home. Each will feel proud always that she had a share. What can be the feelings of those who have held aloof?

We believe that, because of the splendid work nurses have done, and because of the influence of those who return, in their home centers, the delayed Army rank which would have meant so much to them now, will be granted. Just as the Spanish-American War raised nursing standards, so we believe it will be in this instance. All those unsettled problems of nursing care for the masses of the people, which have been so long delayed, must be brought to some definite conclusion by working out, with the proper authorities, plans which will be satisfactory both to nurses themselves and to the public.

Of necessity the war has set aside some of our most cherished nursing standards. We have yielded,—in the unprecedented need of the military service,—state registration and membership in the American Nurses' Association; at the very last we have had to accept applicants from schools not accredited, from those so small as to have a low daily average, and from special hospitals, for special work. As soon as the exigencies of war are over, nurses must begin to take the management of their affairs into their own hands. They must keep in mind that the members of a profession do not look to other groups of people to fix their educational standards for them or to regulate the conditions under which they shall do their work. The value of highly

trained nurses as a part of our national economic structure has been demonstrated so conclusively during this period that the right of nursing to a recognized place among the other professions has certainly been proven.

INFLUENZA

In this month's Department of Public Health Nursing, Miss Foley tells us how the epidemic of influenza was handled in a great city. In our Letter Department, a writer tells us of her efforts to care for its victims in isolated country places. We can add to these a picture of the situation in a city of moderate size.

In our own city of wealth, cultivation, and high educational standards, a city which is a leader in many ways, a city which is somewhat self complacent, there is no visiting nurse association, although there are a considerable number of public health nurses working independently under separate organizations. When the epidemic of influenza reached the city the entire responsibility of meeting the nursing situation was placed in the hands of women of the leisure class, who were without experience along those lines. They gave themselves to the work in the most tireless manner, working all day, every day in the week, and late into the night, as well. In the matter of providing most generously for the care of the sick, in the way of food, bedding, and hospital facilities, the result was excellent, but in the handling of the nursing situation, there was much confusion due to a great extent to the fact that the city was not districted and that there were no nursing centres, such as are described by Miss Foley around which to develop the work.

There was hearty coöperation between the various agencies,—the Health Officer, the Health Bureau, the Red Cross, the various settlements, the hospitals and dispensaries, and the public in general. The results would have been excellent had there been an existing visiting nurse association with experienced leaders, used to conditions in their districts, and able to supervise the work of volunteers.

The six hospitals of the city increased their capacity to the utmost, giving up most of their ordinary work and devoting all possible space to influenza cases. Many pupil nurses fell ill, as in other places, but there were only two deaths among them. Members of recent classes in Home Nursing went into the hospitals for their practical work and proved good assistants in the crisis. Temporary hospitals were started in the Y. W. C. A. building, in two settlements, in a parish house, and in the armory. A home for children whose parents were ill was opened in a private house.

The Red Cross House was headquarters for all who would

volunteer to care for the sick, and there were hundreds of such volunteers from trained nurses to school teachers, practical nurses, and men and women wholly without experience, many of whom did very good work. At week ends, many clerks employed through the week, gave their time from Saturday night till Sunday morning. Automobiles stood in lines waiting to take the emergency aides to and from their cases. Food and bedding were provided for the sick; caps, gowns, and masks were provided for the aides. A thoughtful and helpful arrangement was a nice little lunch in a box which was either given the aide as she started for her case, or was sent to her later, as so often she was in a home where it would not have been safe to eat of the food, or where there was no food.

A great effort was made to have a thorough system of inspection, but because of the confusion in the manner of keeping the lists at headquarters, there was great duplication of effort, and waste of time, strength and material. Some families were visited too many times; nurses would be sent to the same patient in twos and threes, while others had none. These mistakes were in some degree rectified, after the first few days, when a group of trained nurses, many of them retired or married, offered to act as supervisors of the work of the emergency aides, one of their number making and keeping a card catalogue of cases and preparing lists of places to be visited.

The value of the course in Elementary Hygiene and Home Care of the Sick was clearly demonstrated, for the nurse supervisors found a marked difference in care given by the nurse's aides and by those who were absolutely without instruction.

The result of the experiences of this epidemic should be the organization of a strong visiting nurse association in every city that has none, with both doctors and nurses on the board, the executive head to be chosen for her organizing ability, beyond everything. It is predicted that this epidemic will be followed by others, smallpox being already rampant in Russia and Siberia. We should prepare ourselves to meet them when they appear.

OUR MARRIED NURSES, AND OTHERS

The country will never realize the amount and kind of service which has been given during the war period by the married women of our profession, of all classes, who thought they had retired from nursing activities. They have filled prominent places in the work of the Red Cross and of the Motor Corps and have given splendid volunteer service, everywhere, during the epidemic of influenza. Among the best known is Mrs. Tice who practically gave her life while filling her post at the Teaching Center in Chicago during the unusual

demands of the present time. Our nurses everywhere have been faithful unto death. There has never been a time in the history of our profession when so many deaths of nurses have had to be recorded as are given in this issue of the JOURNAL. So far as we have any means of knowing, nurses have been absolutely fearless, both as regards war service and during the epidemic.

RED CROSS MEMBERSHIP

Do not forget that this year, instead of buying Christmas seals, you are asked to renew your Red Cross membership through your own chapter or, if you have never been a member, to become one at once, paying your dollar fee, as do all good citizens who believe in the work of the Red Cross.

If you want the Red Cross magazine, you should add an extra dollar as it is no longer sent automatically with the payment of the membership fee.

Until the war, although the Red Cross had met emergencies as they came, it had not really proven its value, but now it needs no word from us as to its worth. Among its more familiar activities are the making of surgical supplies and of garments, providing food and clothing for refugees of many nations, caring for the families of soldiers, making inquiries and investigations when men are not heard from, providing canteens, rest houses and hostess houses,—as well as conducting the nursing side with which we are more familiar, proving its claim to being the philanthropic arm of the Government. In becoming a member of the Red Cross, by the payment of the \$1 fee, you are helping to carry forward all this work.

AN UNUSUAL RED CROSS UNIT

It is interesting to learn that a Siberian Unit of ten doctors and ten nurses has been made up of recruits from Japan, Korea, and China, for service with the Czech Army in Siberia. Dr. Teusler, who heads the group, is from St. Luke's Hospital, Tokio, where he has a well-deserved reputation for skill and devotion. He and most of his associates are missionaries. The headquarters for this unit seems to be Vladivostok, where there is great need of their services for both wounded soldiers and for the sick among the refugees. The Czechs have a medical organization of their own, but it was not sufficient for their need. Their appeal to the Red Cross for aid resulted in the formation of this unit from the famous "Fourteenth Division." We are indebted to Delia M. Battles of Korea for this information.

THE INTERSTATE SECRETARY

The work undertaken by the Council of National Defense in assigning student nurses to training schools has proved to be such a heavy one that the Interstate Secretary was asked, early in November, to go to Washington to assist in this task. The presidents of the American Nurses' Association, the League and the JOURNAL Board were willing to have her do this, provided she might be free to accept such calls as may come to her for the interstate work. Miss Eldredge has, therefore, gone to Washington, but she may be addressed in care of the JOURNAL office at Rochester by those needing her services in any way. The epidemic of influenza has so upset all nursing plans that her engagements were completely disarranged; now that we are returning to normal conditions once more, delayed state meetings and reorganization work may claim her help, as in the past.

SOME NEW WAR BOOKS

Julia C. Stimson, head of the training school of Washington University Hospital, St. Louis, who went abroad with Unit 21 has given, in a series of letters to her home people, now printed in book form by her father, a picture of the inner life of the nurses serving in the military hospitals abroad, under the title, *Finding Themselves*. Those who have stayed at home will enjoy this glimpse of what their friends are experiencing.

Another book along the same lines, *In the Soldiers' Service*, is written by an American girl, Mary Dexter, who went to England and volunteered as a nurse's aide, at the beginning of the war, serving there, in Belgium and in France. The book, which is intensely interesting reading, shows how a sensible, practical woman, of means and of social prestige, was able to give a special kind of service during the war.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL BOARD OF THE RED CROSS

The General Board of the American National Red Cross will hold its annual meeting at its headquarters, in Washington, on December 11, at 11 a. m. Only formal business will be transacted, such as the election of officers, reading of reports, etc.