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Editorial.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

“ Bold behind the battle, in the open camp all-hallowed,
Patient, wise, and mirthful in the ringed and reeking town,
These endured unresting, till they rested from their labours—
Little wasted bodies, ah, so light to lower down ! ”
From “ The Dirge of Dead Sisters,”
By RUDYARD KIPLING.

We are a utilitarian nation, and duties which produce no tangible results are apt to be neglected. Yet surely it is well that we should remember that the production of wealth is not the whole duty of man, that ideals must be cherished, qualities cultivated which have no lucrative value, generous impulses acted upon, and tender memories fostered, if mankind is to rise to its highest level.

As nurses we have need of ideals, of a high standard of ethics, of devotion to duty, and a sense of appreciation of worth, remembering that good work and quiet heroism reflect honour not only upon individuals but upon the profession at large. Let us, therefore, give honour to those to whom honour is due, and while we do well to esteem those of our colleagues whose hard work in South African hospitals has gained for them well-merited reward, we must not forget another duty which is in some danger of being overlooked. Far away from the homes of those who lie in them are graves which should be tended with loving care, marking the spots where lie those of our countrywomen who, faithful unto death in the discharge of the work assigned to them—the care of the sick and wounded—died for their country as surely as did their compatriots who were slain on the field of battle.

In this connection we must not omit to mention that the large majority of nursing sisters who served in South Africa have subscribed several hundreds of pounds for a memorial in honour of their colleagues who died on active service in South Africa during the war, which memorial is to take

the form of two beautiful stained glass windows in the new Cathedral at Cape Town. The Royal Army Medical Corps have also subscribed for a memorial to be erected at Aldershot to those in this Service who died during the war, on which, we are glad to learn, the names of nursing sisters will also be inscribed.

Before the opportunity passes, some steps should be taken to raise a National Memorial to these devoted women, and we are glad that the Matrons' Council, at its last meeting, took action on this matter, as we report in another column. In his fine poem “The Dirge of Dead Sisters” Mr. Rudyard Kipling has given us an insight into the lives and work of “many honourable women” whom we are proud to claim as colleagues. Is their work to be allowed to pass unacknowledged? Surely those who remain should gather up the records of these last days, and see to it that some National Memorial, worthy of their memory, is placed in a suitable spot.

Fine work can never be wasted or lost; its impress is felt throughout succeeding generations. Whether or not we civilian nurses take steps to perpetuate the memories of our fallen colleagues, their work remains; and, in the memories of those “like to die,” restored to health by their means, in the gratitude of relatives, and perhaps in the higher ideal of womanhood entertained henceforth by those with whom they have been brought in contact, they have their reward. But as a Nation we shall be the poorer, and our ideals lower, if in the stress of life we cannot spare time to honour the memory of those who have passed away leaving behind them a record of brave work done for the Empire. Now that the initial step has been taken, we believe that the nation at large will realise the desirability of such a memorial, and hasten to erect it with all honour. It is not presumable that the soldiers' nurses are less revered than after the Crimean War, when so noble a sum was subscribed in recognition of their arduous labours.

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