

Last Words for 1902.

There is always a tinge of sadness in last words. As one looks back over the past one sees missed opportunities, mistakes, it may be failures. But even if this be so there is no reason for despondency, for the lessons of the past afford instruction for the future, and so we feel that even the disappointments of life have their use, and the experience gained through them has not been in vain, but afford lessons which can be utilised for the common good.

But disappointment is not the keynote of the past year. There is one word only which we desire to carry forward as the watchword of the future—we should like to write it in letters of gold in the vocabulary of every nurse—and that word is Courage. The nursing profession is at present in a transition stage, a stage at which all professions need courage, wisdom, tenacity of purpose, high principle, if they are ultimately to be established on a satisfactory basis. And of all the virtues courage is one of the very rarest, as it is undoubtedly the most desirable virtue. We are not now referring to physical courage, of which British men and women have never been devoid, and which our own profession certainly exhibits conspicuously in its disregard of personal danger in the discharge of duty—courage which takes it into the plague camps of India, the typhus-stricken districts of Ireland, the small-pox hospitals of London; in these and many other environments nurses are to be found exposing themselves fearlessly, and as a matter of course, to dangers from which the world in ordinary shrinks appalled.

But this, after all, is easy; if we fall victims to disease, we fall as the soldier at the post of duty. We are conscious that those whose opinions are of most value to us will appreciate and approve our work.

It requires a far higher form of courage—moral courage—which, rare though it is, we believe is more often possessed by women than by men, to take an unpopular line on matters of principle, and adhere to it while those for whom we have sincere affection stand looking on, silent, and perhaps even disapproving. That is the time when our principles are sounded to their depths, when our house, if it be built upon the sand, will fall in ruins about us. The courage which dares to take an unpopular line, to stand alone, to maintain unflinchingly the attitude which it believes to be right, is the highest type, and one which must be cultivated in the everyday events of life if it is to stand by us in its crises. Can the nursing profession produce it? If so, we can encounter without fear whatever the future has in store. "And, because right is right, to follow right were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

Notices.

CONTRIBUTIONS.

The Editor will at all times be pleased to consider articles of a suitable nature for insertion in this journal—those on practical nursing are specially invited. The Editor will also be pleased to receive paragraphs, such as items of nursing news, results of nurses' examinations, new appointments, reports of hospital functions, also letters on questions of interest to nurses, and newspapers marked with reports of matters of professional interest.

Such communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not necessarily for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W.

A HELPING HAND.

The Editor will be greatly obliged if regular subscribers who receive an additional copy of this journal, will pass it on to some friend who is likely to be interested in the aims of the journal, and also if they will encourage their friends to become subscribers.

OUR PRIZE PUZZLE

Rules for competing for the Pictorial Puzzle Prize will be found on Advertisement page VIII.

A True Saying.

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