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EDITORIAL.

EDUCATION IS A SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY.

The noble article appearing in *The Times* of Monday last, in which "an officer wounded on the Somme" pleads for an educational memorial, as the true war memorial, comes like a draught of cool water to parched lips to those nurses who are striving to obtain for their profession a form of organization and education under which they and their successors shall have spiritual freedom.

"A little less than 500 years ago," says the writer, "a great man desired to commemorate the end of one of the most miserable of wars in which the English nation was ever engaged. He endowed a college 'to pray for the souls of all those who fell in the grievous wars between France and England.' We stand for a moment where Chichele stood because we stand upon a world of graves. With a nobler cause we ought not to be content with a memorial less noble. We ought to perpetuate in peace the idealism of war, because that alone can deliver us from the selfish appetites that lie in wait for us in both. And if we desire to perpetuate it, how can we begin better than by founding upon it the educational system to whose influence generation after generation is submitted? A reconstruction of education, in a generous and liberal spirit, would be the noblest memorial to those who have fallen, because, though many of them were but little 'educated,' it would be the most formal recognition of the world of the spirit for which they fell. It would show that the nation was prepared to submit its life to the kind of principles for which it thought itself justified in asking them to die."

The writer goes on to show that "the fundamental obstacle in the way of educa-

tion in England is simple. It is that education is a spiritual activity which is not commercially profitable, and that the prevailing temper of Englishmen is to regard as most important that which is commercially profitable, and as of only inferior importance that which is not." This is demonstrated in our national economies: the shutting up of museums, not of expensive restaurants, the shortening of the life of school children to meet the shortage of labour. "It is the expression of the scale of values which rules in the minds of most individuals, and which therefore rules in the State, and we shall not make any serious progress until that scale is reversed . . . Courage is a great gift and deserves to be revered because it is so common and reveals the true nature of man. But insight, respect for truth, and contempt for charlatanism, a lucid and piercing intelligence which appraises facts for what they are, and sees through pompous pretences, are also great gifts. We do not reverence them at all in our ordinary life, and so we cannot command them, even when we would give anything to possess them. We cannot command them because, as a nation, we value material possessions, and take pains to acquire them, more than we take pains to acquire spiritual qualities."

Those nurses who love spiritual freedom and fight for it in the organization of their profession may take heart of grace. The material never yet overcame the spiritual. Think, if you will, of the grievous scene on the 18th of January last when a solid mass of members of the Royal British Nurses' Association faced by a platform of its male Hon. Officers, supported by their solicitor, bartered, without a question or a protest, their Charter of professional liberty for what seemed to them, for the moment, material well-being. Who could look on those rows of faces and not realize the absence of the spirit in the dumb body?

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