

HIGH IDEALS, HEART, HOLINESS.

The Dean of Rochester, the Rev. John Storrs, writes a Foreword in the *League Magazine* of the St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester, Nurses' League, which many nurses will appreciate. The Dean says:—

A new glory has fallen upon the profession during the last four years. Never before have such demands been made upon us. The womanhood of England has risen nobly to the call. But the burden is heavy, and many must often be worn and overtired by the long strain. What can I say to help?

Well, I will venture to suggest one or two thoughts—commonplace and obvious, perhaps. But it is the commonplace and obvious that we sometimes miss.

1. *High Ideals*.—Your profession is one of the noblest, if not the noblest, that a woman can adopt. You are brought face to face with the twin realities of Life and Death. You are in daily and hourly contact with the mysteries of pain and sickness. Your mission is sacred. You are engaged in the great and blessed ministry of healing. You are fellow-workers with Christ Himself. Take then no lower view of your position and work than this. You may well magnify your office, so long as you do not magnify self. This will lead you to leave no stone unturned to equip yourself fully for your high and responsible task. And remember that the better educated the woman, the better the nurse in the long run. I need not dwell upon this aspect of the question. Hold up before yourselves then a High Ideal of the profession. Think of this whenever you feel the hardening effect of custom and routine. Think of it if ever tempted to anything which in your best moments you feel would be inconsistent with the dignity of your high calling.

2. *Heart*.—Mind and strength are, I know, devoted most generously to your work. You have always tried to do this at the risk of breaking down. But the daily and the nightly duty will be lightened—this is true of all professions—in proportion as you are able to throw *your heart into it*. The work that we love we always do the best. A high sense of duty constitutes indeed a wonderful motive. It enables multitudes of men and women to "stick it" under most trying circumstances. But there is no driving force in the world equal to Love. Learn to love your work. It will show itself in the tact and sympathy which you will bring to bear in your relations both with patients and

colleagues. It will help you to be cheerful even when tired and depressed. It will carry you through disappointments which might otherwise embitter your heart. It was said one day of a woman by One who read the secrets of the soul, "She hath done what she could." She had not done much; but she had thrown her whole heart into an offering to her Lord. Thus she earned a commendation that has sounded down the ages.

"Love the work," I said. "But how can we make ourselves do that? It is hard, often irksome. Patients are sometimes refractory. My fellow-nurses are occasionally perhaps a little tiresome. Even doctors are human." I think the best, if not the only, way is to look upon it as an offering to Him who came as the Great Healer and spent so much of His short ministry amongst the sick. Learn to love Him, and you will not fail to throw your heart into all that you do in His name and for Him.

3. *Holiness*.—You minister to the sick. And your ministry is for the healing of the body. You are not Chaplains. Nor of course would you dream of invading his province. But when men and women are laid low by illness or wounds they are often far more open to good influences than when in the full tide of health. And you can at least act as a link between them and the Chaplain. This is surely possible without any intrusion.

But whether this be so or no, your personal influence, whether conscious or unconscious, is sure to tell. And what that influence will be depends upon *what you are*. For indeed it is what we are that we photograph on another's soul. Strive then after holiness. Do not neglect the means by which it is attained—Prayer—Public Worship—reading the Bible—Holy Communion. The patient whom you attend may never recover his bodily health; he may pass out from the Hospital to the grave. Well, at least without any Pharisaism or priggishness, you may devoutly thank God if you are able to say, "I think and hope my influence over him was for good."

I hope you will not think I have been pitching things too high. But I am most profoundly convinced that High Ideals, Heart, and Holiness are essential conditions to be aimed at by all who would stand high in the ranks of your noble sisterhood. You may fail over and over again. High Ideals may wax cold, and Holiness seem as unattainable as the stars. Then remember God does not ask for the impossible, but only that we *should do our best*. The great fault lies not in not succeeding, but in ceasing to try.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)