

meet us, but streams up from *behind* us over our heads."

Will you bear with me, as one whose professional career is drawing to a close, if I remind you of your golden opportunities in this your great School of Nursing and of the treasures which are yours? Opportunities, as you know, are very sensitive things; if you slight them on their first visit, you seldom see them again. And your first great opportunity is to be found in the course of study laid down for you during your training. Now the study of the theory of your profession, if it be carried out with thought and clearness, with energy long continued and persevering, will lead on and up from stage to stage, till you reach not only knowledge but understanding. This knowledge to be lasting must be real; you must not bridge over to yourselves difficulties whether little or great, or take a leap over them, leaving a part behind that is not sound or solid. To do this is to teach yourselves to make mistakes; difficulties are the very things which by being grappled with and overcome make your minds powerful and active. But in truth you must remember, the effect of study on knowledge is at the utmost a very small thing when compared with its effect on the whole character. Knowledge at its best will vanish away. Even the world itself dwarfs it in the distance as ages go by. But the effect on character of earnest, persevering, successful work is permanent. It has the seal of eternity. To study successfully you must learn to think. As you go through life you will find that original thought is the only power that carries weight with others—I do not mean novel thought, reaching things which have never been grasped before, but *original* thought which in us has a proper birth-place and development. If you have thought out a thing for yourself, instead of receiving it at second hand, or if the thought infused into your mind by another has germinated and brought forth fruit which is distinctly your own, how much more real, substantial, fixed in your memory is that knowledge than any other; how much more effective? And then, having gained your knowledge, you must seek the power to use it. Do you remember the words of our great English philosopher and great Chancellor: "Simple men admire studies, and wise men use them. For they teach not their own use, but *that* there is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation"? The mind may be stored with facts, and with true theories, and with many a wise observation, but after all, it is the working of the mind upon itself which renders it quick at remembering, ready at using, lively in applying, reserved and truthful so as not to misapply, powerful at concentrating its powers to solve the next apparent difficulty, and considerate and judicious, and able to take broad views in dealing with others.

And the second Great Treasure which is yours in the G.R.I. is the treasure of *Tradition*. Long years ago, when many of you were not yet born, before the solid, beautiful house in which we now work existed, there were those at work creating by their genius what is your most priceless heritage to-day,

Tradition. "The founding of a good Tradition"—how those words ring down the years. However various the powers, however dissimilar the characters of those far distant years, all had one work to do in a remarkable degree—Tradition they had to found for others to hand on and modify, debase or exalt, but never to found again. Some of you will already have learnt here, or have realised in your life here, that this and that evil, or baseness, or meanness, or unkindness, is "a thing not to go on here"; if that be so, how great a treasure for you is Tradition. How you will uphold what in it is high, strengthen what in it is weak; know that no contribution which you can make to the brightness or beauty or honour of your training-school can compare to what you may do for its Tradition. And the best legacy you can leave us is the memory of good examples; the speaking of earnest words, and, above all, the doing, when you leave us, of good deeds.

And yet another Treasure that is yours is the treasure of Association—Association binding the present with the past. How wonderful the association created for all and shared by all arising out of your nearness to each other, through your being called from your homes and associated in your School of Nursing. You have seen the chemist pour together colourless fluids, you have seen the tints come out, you have seen them become opaque, or congeal into a solid mass. So characters—clear, transparent, colourless—change their appearance and their properties and their influences when blended together. How good is this association which teaches us to live happily with others, to appreciate varieties of characters, and which allows of the formation of those glorious eternal friendships, which are among the most precious things of life. Your School of Nursing, like all such Institutions, is a commemoration. Like all other educational institutions, it is for the living; it is of necessity also a remembrance of the dead. Like all others, it is full of the intense vitality of the young; it is also in itself a noble Mausoleum. Like all others, its daily voice is "Learn how to live," but from it arises in every pause of that living hum, "memento mori."

Are not such associations rich in power to bid you be like-minded; to rouse us all to self-sacrifice and devotion, to make us think it a duty to aim high, to seek fullest cultivation of our powers, "to scorn delights and live laborious days"?

Every one of you entered on your training here with a really high ideal. Abandon not that guiding star—part not lightly with your ideal. Pursue it, knowing that in so doing you follow after Light, which Light is fixed in a sure place to guide you, shining in a broad clear track on the face of the sea, shining on your face and rejoicing your eyes with its beauty—not a Light only, but a Life, a Breath, a Spirit from on high.

M. S. D.

The Matron of the Victoria Hospital for Children Chelsea will be very grateful for Gifts for Christmas and also for Outgrown Clothing for the Babies and Children.

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