

# Royal British Nurses' Association.

Incorporated by



Royal Charter.

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

## OBITUARY.

It is with deep regret that, just at the moment of going to press, we have received notice of the death of Dr. Bedford Fenwick, who was a Founder of the Association and a Signatory to its Royal Charter of Incorporation. Dr. Fenwick has, throughout his life, done much for the evolution of the Profession of Nursing and he took a very active part in the movement for the State Registration of Nurses. The whole profession owes to him a deep debt of gratitude.

## COURAGE.

*What's brave, what's noble,  
Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,  
And make death proud to take us.*

—*Antony and Cleopatra.*

There is perhaps no word more commonly used at the present time, no quality so much extolled, as courage. Never, too, has it appeared in a more dazzling light than it does in these days during the vicissitudes of war. One incident crowds upon another, as the days go by, to exemplify the heights to which courage can attain. Witness the events in Poland which will make an epic within the history of Europe for future ages. Then, as we are writing this article, we can picture the Captain of the *Courageous* at his post, as his great ship goes down, with his hand at the salute to the flag. The adventures of young airmen, scattering their propaganda leaflets over enemy country, thrilled us to the core. As we write there comes to us the remembrance that the great attribute of the Patron Saint of England is Courage. It is an inspiring thought and one that might be followed into many ramifications in the story of our country. Deeds such as we have referred to make the *reality* of courage apparent to the world. It is a quality, this of courage, that eclipses all material possessions in value and particularly so when, as at the present time, the purpose which calls it forth is one of the highest moral value, one, too, that is inevitably destined to take its toll of sacrifice, suffering and sorrow ere it is pursued to its ultimate end. We are having examples which, so to speak, should be chiselled in granite for future ages to read, examples of how a spiritual quality can still, in this age of materialism, eclipse all accepted values from a materialistic point of view.

### Two Types of Courage.

Often we have distinctions made between moral and physical courage and often, too, with justice, it is maintained that the former is the more admirable. Generally speaking it is so because it is worked out of one's own self-conscious thinking, out of conscience and freedom, while often physical courage arises from pressure from outside and not from freedom of thought or conscience; sometimes, indeed, it arises from something that even the animal possesses. It may seem rather like labouring the argument to suggest that knowledge and thought belong

to true courage and particularly to moral courage, but it is not enough merely to have good intentions when it is a question of courage. One must *know* what one is doing and *why*. Instinct and impulse often gave rise to courage in the Middle Ages, but what is right in one age is wrong for another. In those days the intellect did not function after the same fashion or to the same extent as it does to-day and deeds of courage were very often inspired by high spiritual influences and teaching but often too by instinct. But in the materialism of the present time, and in the intricacies of thinking, particularly of political thinking, knowledge wrought out of thought is necessary; clear thinking is essential where courage is concerned. The sufferings endured in medieval ages, under tyranny and oppression and conflicts in the past, have been so transmuted that they, for the most part, take place in the realm of mental struggle; words have become, to a great extent, the weapons of the present age and evolution proceeds through a battle of brains, but one influenced overmuch by economics and bureaucracy. These two influences are both retardative forces when carried too far and become antagonistic to the assertion of some great philosopher whose name we cannot recall, that "thought goes free." It is in circumstances such as these give rise to, and a lack of the wisdom that thought can bring, that disputes arise in which moral courage has had to take the place of the physical courage that characterised the conflicts of earlier times. Now, indeed, it is the sword of the Word that should be invoked. War as we understand it does not properly belong to the present age of the world's evolution, and everything that is set into an age where it ought not to have a place is bound to become evil and degenerate in its methods; witness the present type of warfare such as that which has been carried out on the civilian towns of Poland and the use of gas and other forces that have turned warfare into mere mechanised murder on a large scale.

In relation, however, to a consideration of the two aspects of courage—moral and physical courage have, at the present time, joined forces, have united in a gigantic moral and physical effort to preserve for future generations the stage of culture to which humanity has attained in the march of the ages. Herein we have a fine example of the triumph of mind and spirit over the physical, showing that the first two are, in the ultimate, dominant and that moral courage, which holds within it true freedom of thought, can command physical courage, because the first has knowledge in it; herein lies a difference between knowledge and mere appearance. The mind of the man who has freedom and knowledge in his thought becomes resolute, when he feels that his cause is a just one.

### Courage and Will.

This leads us on to one aspect of psychology, *i.e.*, that courage is linked up with a perfectly controlled will, the kind of will that guards true freedom for its possessor, the freedom that retains its right to a choice between right and wrong, no matter what the cost. Irrespective of self such a will can take all passions and selfish aims

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