

London, Christmas Eve, 1877

My very dear "Matron" Miss Fisher,

I give you joy this first blessed Christmas of your charge - & joy to all who are in your charge. May your Christmases be many & each a new Christmas - & a really New Year - a New Year of progress. My very dear friends I say, Hurra for a hard beginning, some progress, & a blessed end. That is the true sign of a good beginning, as said, (not exactly in these words) our great founder some 300 years ago. And when was any good work done for God without troubles, especially at the outset? So,

Forward the Light Brigade
O the brave charge they made!

No pains will be spared to make the trained Nurses of Britain worthy of their brave charge - their great career. You have yourselves a beautiful Hospital, a beautiful Medical staff, & a beautiful Matron. Will you spare no pains to answer to the pains?

Be then every day more & more real, honest thorough Nurses in your Nursing. O fie to a careless Nurse! When life or death depend upon it. Always Forward! Forward! always bring your Nursing to the bar of your own conscience - even when, or rather more when, Head Nurse, Matron & Doctor are not there to judge it.

I, in my old age, do this. Do it all your lives, do it with all your might, if you would be good Nurses. A good Nurse will make progress & learn something to the last day of her Nursing life.

There is a great temptation to a young Community to be in a hurry, to scratch the ground & not to dig deep - to do surface work - to put in cut flowers instead of growing flowers & fruit from the seed. Strike your roots deep, rather than spread your branches too far. Stick together & stick to your Superintendent like a bundle of faggots - you know the fable.

For this purpose I will tell you the rule which exists in a community I know. They read once a week the verses about charity in the famous chapter in Corinthians - & 3 or 4 times a day they just think to themselves - Am I doing that? If not, I am a Nurse like a jingling cymbal.

Now dear friends, will you Make a bargain with me? I will do this till next Christmas, (if I live so long, for I am very ill,) if you will.

Wish well to every other trained, and training & "in training" Nurse in the country. O what a good thing is friendly rivalry!

In past days the utmost that was done for a Nurse was to expect from her obedience; she was simply told what had to be done, & ordered to go & do it. Now, the utmost pains are taken to show her why it has to be done & how. (Is it now then much easier now to have the spirit of obedience?) This then is what is called training. Training which is given her & experience which the Nurse must give herself every day of her life, & which her training shows her how to give herself, go to make the good Nurse. Let your experience cast its light before, so as to give light to the path before you - not only to the path behind, - which, as S. Paul says, you must leave behind. That is a melancholy sort of experience - Show that you have been with Jesus - don't be afraid of seeming unlearned & ignorant. I feel every day of my life - though perhaps I number as many years of experience as you of life - how ignorant, unlearned I am. The best trained Nurse is unlearned & ignorant. Do you remember what it says in Acts about S. Peter's & S. John's wonderful influence, & all coming from this, that through they were unlearned & ignorant, people could see that they had been with Jesus. Can our patients so sharp to see, & our assistants see in us that each day we have been with Jesus? Each one of us may in her life perhaps remember some one of whom she always felt that she had been with Jesus. What an influence she had! What a shame it is that I & every one of us cannot say this of herself! What shows that I have been with Jesus today? A really great man who lived long ago - one of the first of the trainers both of Missionaries & of Nurses - his nurses will number some 20,000, & I have

