

Royal British Nurses' Association.

(Incorporated by



Royal Charter.)

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION

AN INTERESTING CEREMONY.

PRESENTATION TO MISS MARGARET BREAY.

A specially interesting ceremony took place at the offices of the Royal British Nurses' Association on Saturday, May 29th, when Miss Margaret Breay was presented by some of her friends with a beautiful antique mirror and a pair of fine blue and white old Spode bottles. In addition Sister Carter, who was present, gave to Miss Breay a lovely sheaf of flowers—pale mauve irises, yellow snapdragons, roses, pink carnations and other exquisite blossoms—a feast of beauty.

The chair was taken by Miss Henrietta J. Hawkins, M.R.B.N.A., P.L.G., who said:—

In accepting this position which you have so kindly asked me to fill I do so with a sense of my own inadequacy to do justice to the subject. We are met to do honour, where honour is indeed due, to the guest of the afternoon, our dear friend Miss Breay, and to offer for her acceptance this gift, which friends who best know her tastes have selected. The gift, I venture to think, is singularly appropriate, apart from the niche for which I believe it is destined in Miss Breay's charming Surrey cottage. A mirror symbolises truth, and truth, as we know, has been the root principle of our friend's public and private life. It needs no words of mine to set forth Miss Breay's worth, it is apparent to all who know her. But, as Mr. Spurgeon once said, "Put flowers in your mother's bonnet and not on her grave," and as I rather admire that advice, I hope Miss Breay will forgive me if I pin a few flowers in her bonnet this afternoon from the posy of her many fine qualities. Her splendid natural ability, her well-informed mind, her infinite capacity for taking pains, her unselfish devotion, her boundless energy have been unstintedly poured into the building up of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING of which we are so justly proud. On this solid foundation, so well and truly laid, has arisen slowly and painfully the Registration Act, the fruits of which will be enjoyed by generations of nurses long after we ourselves have passed away.

I lately heard Bishop Gore say in St. Paul's Cathedral that next to the salvation of his soul he prayed that God would allow him to leave behind

some work that would last. Miss Breay has the satisfaction of knowing that the immense sacrifice of her private life, of her ease, her time and her money, has not been in vain—her work will last. I feel confident that I am voicing the wish of all present when, in offering this mirror and the beautiful bottles for Miss Breay's acceptance I say that it is the expression of our unbounded admiration and affection for a talented and brave pioneer, a loyal colleague and an unselfish and generous friend.

MISS BREAY, in reply, said: Miss Hawkins and Ladies, it is impossible adequately to express my thanks to you for your kind words and most charming gifts. In the campaign in which we have been associated together each has had her own particular bit of work, and the making of speeches has never been mine—indeed, on one of the few occasions when I made an effort in that direction one of my relations—whose candid criticisms are so good for one—advised me to keep for the future to things I could do, and not attempt those I could not. (Laughter.)

So I will not attempt a speech, but just talk to my friends of whom there are so many in this room. First, of course, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, who, as Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, gave me my chance of becoming a probationer in that grand institution when the Matrons of other large London hospitals told me to come back in six years' time. From that day to this I have struggled after the "banner with a strange device" held aloft by our great leader.

There are present also members of the Matrons' Council (which did such splendid work and meant so much to those working for State Registration of Nurses) and of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, by which its spade work for the Bill was carried on. The National Union of Trained Nurses and the Fever Nurses' Association, represented here, have also been valuable allies, and, ultimately, all the Societies promoting the State Registration movement have been affiliated in the Central Committee, members of which are present this afternoon.

It is a peculiar joy to me that this presentation has been made in the rooms of the Royal British Nurses' Association. It was my first love, and I was present at the meeting at St. George's Hall in February, 1888, when it was publicly founded with high hopes.

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