

A NOBLE LIFE.

SISTER SOPHIA ELLEN CARTWRIGHT, S.R.N.

In our last issue we had only time to record briefly the death of Sister Cartwright, for many years Secretary of the Registered Nurses' Society, 431, Oxford Street, London, W. 1, but her life and work demand more than a brief notice, for she is one to whom the Profession of Nursing owes much.

Miss Cartwright entered St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, for training in 1885, and obtained her Certificate in 1888, remaining on in the hospital for another year as Staff Nurse. In 1889 she was appointed Staff Nurse at Gordon House Home Hospital, Hollis Street, London, W., where she subsequently became Sister-in-Charge, a position which she held until 1896, and discharged the duties with the greatest credit, highly valued by the distinguished medical practitioners who sent their patients to the Home for her skill, and care of them; by the patients for her devoted nursing, and sympathetic kindness; and, by the nurses, for the high standard, which by precept and practice, she always set before them. Thus, one who worked under her at Gordon House wrote recently: "She taught me all the high ideals of life, and just by her example."

From 1896 until incapacitated by illness in 1923, Miss Cartwright held the position of Sister-Secretary of the Registered Nurses' Society, at first at 269, Regent Street, W., and from 1903 onwards at 431, Oxford Street, where her excellent business capacity, and professional knowledge, were of great value both to the committee and to the members of the staff. Here again her strong professional sense dominated the office, her exquisitely neat uniform—the well-fitting cap, with goffered lace edges both to cap and strings immaculate in their freshness—was a pattern to every nurse entering the office. The same perfection in official books and records remains an abiding reminder of her thoroughness and conscientious care.

As is well known, 431, Oxford Street, is the Headquarters of a number of important societies of nurses, and, in the course of her work, Sister Cartwright came in contact with nurses from all parts of the world. We could not have desired that they should have been received by a better representative of English nurses. Quiet, unassuming and retiring in manner, there was at the same time a sturdy uprightness about her, a heritage no doubt from the good old North Country stock from which she was descended, and she always impressed one with her absolute sincerity and honour.

Chief among the Societies to which she owed allegiance, and to which she gave a large amount of honorary assistance, was the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, now the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council. She was fully convinced of the need of a uniform standard of nursing education, and of the Registration by the State of those who attained it, and identified herself closely with its work.

In 1901 she was elected by the Nurses on the Staff of the Registered Nurses' Society, which has always associated itself with professional societies, as their representative at the great International Congress, convened by the International Council of Nurses, and held at Buffalo, U.S.A., an experience which gave her great pleasure. She was very fond of travelling, and as the guest of some of the leading Matrons in Canada and the United States enjoyed a delightful time in Quebec, Montreal, Toronto and in Washington, Philadelphia, New York and Boston—the memory of which greatly enriched her life.

It was in December, 1920, that an accident incapacitated Sister Cartwright for some months. She returned to duty, but her friends realised that she was "never the same" afterwards, and on January 2nd, 1923, she had an attack of cerebral hæmorrhage which compelled her finally to relinquish work.

In the unremitting care of Miss H. Brewerton and Miss E. J. Hurlston, she recovered somewhat, and was able to enjoy a brief stay at Swanage, but a second and more severe attack of hæmorrhage occurred in September of the same year. Thenceforward she was entirely dependant on the care of others, and received it, in fullest measure, from Miss Rhoda Metherell, S.R.N. (at one time a valued member of the Registered Nurses' Society), Matron of the War Memorial Hospital, Alford, where the last fifteen months of her life were spent.

Miss Metherell writes: "It has been a great privi-

lege and honour to me to care for her so long, and to the very end. It was a great responsibility, for she came to me, as it were a trust, and a very precious one, from all her friends. There seems a big gap in our little hospital, for one and all loved her, and found work for her such a real pleasure."

On March 2nd she wrote: "We laid Sister to rest yesterday in the peaceful and pretty old churchyard of her native village of Ulceby by the side of other members of her family, within sight of her old home, Ulceby Grange.

"The service was taken by the Vicar, the Rev. W. G. Peacock, who knew her from childhood. The hymns chosen were 'Rock of Ages' and 'Let Saints on earth in concert sing, with those whose work is done.'



SISTER S. E. CARTWRIGHT, S.R.N.,
Secretary, Registered Nurses' Society, 1896-1923.

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