

THE PASSING OF A GREAT SPIRIT.

MAUDE MacCALLUM, S.R.N.

The announcement that Maude MacCallum had passed away early on the morning of June 14th was received with relief by the friends to whom she was dear, deeply as they realised their personal loss, and that of the profession at large, for though with unflinching courage she had borne prolonged pain—nay, agony—of body, and her spirit to the end never faltered, yet she suffered to the limits of human endurance, and longed for release. Once when the pain was unusually severe she said, "God would never let anyone suffer as I do without a purpose. There is some wonderful meaning behind it. Anyhow, it gives one the power to conquer, and perhaps it gives us more power in the spiritual world."

The daughter of Mr. James W. MacCallum of Dublin, and granddaughter of the late Major John MacCallum of Dover, our friend was educated at St. Margaret's Hall, Dublin, and subsequently entered Trinity College, Dublin, where she took all the course open to women in those days. She also matriculated at the Royal University of Ireland before entering the Nurse Training School of the Adelaide Hospital, Dublin. After obtaining her certificate she joined the Nurses' Co-operation, then located at 8, New Cavendish Street, London, W., and for some years worked quietly as a private nurse. Included in her work while on the Nurses' Co-operation were several years of War Service. She was also elected a Member of the Committee of the Co-operation and while serving upon it, originated and, with the help of two other far-seeing nurses, carried to a successful issue, the scheme for its Sickness Benefit Fund, and also originated the Benevolent Fund, two most practical pieces of work for the benefit of the Nurses of that Co-operation.

It was a personal experience which led Miss MacCallum, in 1919, to found the Professional Union of Trained Nurses, for, when injustice and tyranny touched her own life she realised how defenceless were many of her colleagues under similar conditions, and with unselfish singleness of purpose she devoted herself thenceforth to the betterment of the conditions of the "working nurse" and to her protection from unqualified competition when trained.

The P.U.T.N. was registered as a Trade Union (without a strike clause) in order to ensure that it should always be managed by the nurses themselves, and it was for starting this Union that Miss MacCallum was attacked by one of the members of the Nurses' Co-operation (now deceased) in his paper the *Nursing Mirror*. With great spirit she brought an action for libel in the High Court of Justice against that paper, a course which proved entirely justified by her receiving an abject public apology in Court, complete indemnity for her costs, and £500 damages. Her splendid moral courage in taking this libel upon her into a Court of Law, and refusing to be traduced and insulted by this commercial Nursing Paper, will no doubt, in future, save many nurses from being tyrannised over by the commercial Nursing Press, and we believe that the debt of gratitude which they owe her will be increasingly appreciated, as the truth of her

favourite motto: "Who would be free themselves must strike the blow," becomes more and more understood.

In February, 1920, Miss MacCallum was appointed a Member of the First General Nursing Council for England and Wales by the Minister of Health, at that time the Right Hon. Christopher Addison, M.P., P.C., and during her term of office upheld the right of nurses to manage their own affairs, and opposed medical and lay domination. She consistently voted for, and spoke in support of, proposals for the benefit of the Nursing Profession and opposed many recommendations of the majority which she considered inimical to its interests, in spite of derision and rudeness. But however forcibly she spoke she never showed the least bitterness, nor was she ever small towards individuals. In all the relations of life she was wont to speak of unkindness as "evil forces," and her firm conviction of the ultimate triumph of good over evil was unabated to the day of her death.

The unselfishness of her nature is evidenced by the manner in which, though suffering for years from the corroding disease which ultimately caused her death, she made no mention of it, even to those nearest and dearest to her, preferring to spare them the pain which she knew that knowledge would bring for as long as might be. Only a year ago, when a relation was in the last stages of malignant disease she went to him and shared the heavy nursing, never allowing him and others to guess that, while she was their stay and consolation, she was suffering from the same disease herself.

Her friends were wont to comment on her little inscrutable smile—Monna Lisa they would call her—now they know that behind it was the knowledge of the fate which awaited her, and that she was meeting it undaunted.



THE LATE MISS E. MAUDE MacCALLUM, S.R.N.

It was one day towards the end of last November Miss MacCallum telephoned that she wanted to come to 431, Oxford Street. "I have something to tell you." She was manifestly ill and in pain as she told her sad news, and should have been resting instead of working. Nevertheless with the subordination of self to duty, which always characterised her, she went on to a meeting of the Professional Union, and then home on the top of an omnibus—an hour's ride in bitter weather. She only left the house again to be taken to the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital in the Euston Road, N.W., where she was cared for to the end by the doctors the Matron, Miss G. R. Hale, R.R.C., and the Sisters and Nurses with the greatest kindness and devotion, and her room was always bright with beautiful flowers.

In this connection, soon after she received the gift of lovely flowers from Her Majesty the Queen, which gave her so much pleasure, a gentlewoman from the Dominions died in the ward next to her. She was so lonely that three days after her death no arrangements had been made for her funeral. She went to the grave with no relations or friends near, but the last of the Queen's flowers, by Miss MacCallum's special desire, went with her, and "the nurses thought it seemed less lonely."

Once, when she asked the doctor "How long?" she received the reply "When you came in I thought it would

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)