

profession or her own. He cannot expect her entirely to conform to a standard of ethics and qualifications set up by himself. She is a ministering human being, not a ministering angel, and scenes of stress and suffering make up her continual environment. But he has every right to expect that having chosen to be a Private Nurse, she is temperamentally adapted for that vocation. He has a right to expect her to be a courteous, kindly, and efficient gentlewoman.

AN APPRECIATION.

MARGARET R. STEWART, F.B.C.N.

At the Scottish Nurses' Club, 203, Bath Street, Glasgow, on August 2nd, at the funeral service of the late Miss Margaret R. Stewart, Secretary of the Club, Dr. John MacIntyre delivered the following beautiful appreciation. Miss Stewart was a Fellow of the British College of Nurses, whose early and unexpected death is a loss indeed to the College of which she was a much valued and keen supporter:—

"I have been asked to say something about Miss Stewart, because I happen to be one of her oldest friends, my memories of her going back thirty years and more.

Margaret Stewart was a great, brave, strong soul in a frail body—how frail, most of us know who in these later years have anxiously watched the fires of the passion for service glow within her, until, ultimately, there was conflagration as they literally burnt her life out.

She was not always frail, however, thirty years ago; when I had the honour of working with her as a student in the wards of the Royal Infirmary where she was a nursing sister, it was far otherwise; but although bodily health and strength were then hers, yet there was always something ethereal and spirituelle about her. In those days she impressed all who came into contact with her as an unusual personality, and despite that ethereal quality and the fair Rossetti face, we sensed profounds of feeling and of will power that contrasted strangely with her bodily presence. George MacDonald, one of her favourite authors, somewhere in his writings, describes a Highland stream, not turbulent as in spate over rough boulders, but sweeping broad-brimmed in silent might through a wide strath under full sunshine; and, if I remember aright, he used of it these words, "Gentle, like all powerful things." That was the marked quality of our friend—a quality that was both gentleness and power. She mingled finely elements that in others usually clash, fused them into something that in herself became a unity: in her were singly blended the ideal and the real, the spiritual and the natural, the Puritan and the artist in an uncommon degree. There seemed, indeed, to be an essential rightness about all she did. Very early no doubt, when she chose her life-work, she had recognised that while what we do in life counts for much, yet how we do it is something no less vital.

The passion of her life was to serve, and for her and some

of her colleagues nursing was not only a profession but almost a religion. Yet, as you all know, it was not only in nursing that her desire for service found expression, but in the organisation of great enterprises like this institution, and in work relating to legislation affecting the nursing profession generally; and further still in private life, where in quiet, hidden ways she brought solace to many who were stricken sore.

She was fortunate that in her day she came into touch with three great figures who influenced her greatly for good: Rebecca Strong, at that time the Matron of the Royal Infirmary, who had at one period of her early life served under that Saint of the nursing sisterhood, Florence Nightingale, had shewn her the fuller meaning of service; and the purpose in life, I believe, became clearer to her from her close association with that man of great purpose, William Macewan, the supreme genius of surgery in our generation. (As you know, he thought so highly of Nurse Stewart's skill that he placed his most difficult cases in her hands—the great brain operations were her special care.) And,

finally, I think, she enriched her enthusiasm for humanity by the teaching of that great spiritual voice, John Hunter of Trinity. . . . But if she was fortunate in her teachers, they were no less fortunate in their pupil. Service, Purpose, Enthusiasm for Humanity—she took all these various rays and fused them into a flower of flame that was the life of Margaret Stewart.

Yet not only did she serve: she showed others how to serve—showed them that the only true happiness lay in service; and that true service involved no bonds of limitation, but was indeed perfect freedom. And it was possible at times for those of us who were near to her to watch her happy strategy, so quietly deft, as she led some simple soul who was frittering away her life in foolish ways—led her into some little task of service, and then on to something larger, and so at last to the great enthusiasms that were her own.

And now at this very hour, away in the North, under the shadow of the big Highland hills she loved so well, her

closest friends lay to rest all that is mortal of Margaret Stewart. And with quiet and grateful hearts we here remember her in this the place she has made memorable by her life of service—gentle, like all powerful things."

JOHN MACINTYRE.



THE LATE MISS MARGARET R. STEWART, F.B.C.N.,
Secretary, Scottish Nurses' Club.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

The officials of National Councils of Nurses, affiliated to the International Council of Nurses, as well members of these Councils, and other persons, are asked to note the new address of the Headquarters of the International Council, which has now removed from 1, Place du Lac, to 14, Quai des Eaux Vives, Geneva, Switzerland.

Application for the Report of the recent Conference of the I.C.N. should be made to the Secretary, Miss C. Reimann, at the above address. It is desirable to write for it as soon as possible as the supply will be strictly limited. Price 4s.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)