

helped me to draft the Nurses Registration Bill, introduced into the House of Commons in 1904 by Dr. Farquharson, and also the Bill introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Ampthill in 1908, when it passed without a Division at any stage. You enjoyed the happiness of seeing the great reward of your labours when, in 1919, seated on the crimson benches of the mighty in the House of Lords, you heard the Royal Assent given to the Nurses Registration Acts for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland (applause.) That was a glorious moment.

Then you have held many positions of great professional responsibility and honour: your name appears in the Incorporation Clause of the Royal Charter of the Royal British Nurses' Association, you have been Vice-President of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses, Hon. Secretary of the Provisional Committee of the I.C.N., 1899, Foundation Member and Councillor of the International Council of Nurses, 1900; Hon. Treasurer for 21 years (applause) and Hon. Member in 1925, and Hon. Treasurer of our National Council of Nurses, which post you still hold.

Of your literary work as Hon. Assistant Editor of the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING* all the world knows, and as a Nursing Journal you have helped to place it in the front rank.

Your work as Vice-President of this beautiful College during the past three years has been most valuable, and with those of other great nursing pioneers your name appears in the Scroll of our Diploma, and you have a right to wear the fine robes, as a Councillor of the College, which add so greatly to the inspiration of this scene.

What more need be said? Just this. That, as a woman, your kindness, sympathy, generosity, and singleness of purpose are all beyond praise.

And now I am going to pin this little Gold Medal on your breast, and wish you many years in which you can continue your devoted service to the greatest of all women's professions, which you have adorned for so many years.

Mrs. Fenwick then pinned on the Medal, and Miss Breay clasped and kissed her hand.

Miss Breay's Reply.

In expressing her thanks for the beautiful gift Miss Breay said:—

DEAR MADAM PRESIDENT,—It is impossible for me to express my thanks for your generous words. To me it has been sufficient honour that you counted me worthy to be associated with you in the great undertakings which you have carried to so successful a conclusion during a long term of years, with such courage, tenacity of purpose and masterly generalship.

The State Registration of Nurses, which meant so much to the sick through the establishment of Nursing educational standards, as well as the emancipation of trained nurses. Few even dimly realised what the accomplishment of that would entail, it seemed so simple and so reasonable a proposal, but great economic issues were involved, and it meant a thirty years' struggle.

The International Council of Nurses, which, founded by you in London in 1899, has gone on from success to success, until now some 140,000 nurses are enlisted under its banner, with what benefit to the health of the Nations and the increased happiness and efficiency of individual nurses cannot be computed, nor its beneficent influences in helping to promote the peace of the world.

And greatest and most important of all, *THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING*—I say most important because without it the first two could never have been achieved—and with the greatest self-sacrifice you have, for 36 years, and always with the support and sympathy of Dr. Bedford Fenwick, maintained for nurses the priceless possession of a free voice in the Press. It is an aim worth living for,

worth working for, and, if need be, to those who love their profession, and who realise its supreme importance, worth dying for.

Therefore since you have judged me worthy—you, whose judgment and acute perception in the almost half century it has been my honour and privilege to know you have never erred in things great or small—I accept with gratitude and humility, and shall wear with pleasure and pride, this beautiful Medal, which is the outward and visible sign of the confidence which from you I prize so highly, and through which I may hope to acquire the merit with which you have been good enough to credit me.

Miss Breay resumed her seat amidst great applause.

THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE.

PRESENTATION TO THE COLLEGE.

Miss Isabel Macdonald, who had been invited by the President to present *The Book of Remembrance*, said:—

When I was asked to present this Book of Remembrance to the College, on behalf of the Council, as a Memorial to Miss Emmeline Maude MacCallum, I felt I should have liked to have had a little more time in which to consider how to express adequately what we owe to this colleague who passed out from our ranks after great physical suffering a few years ago. As I tried to think of some remarks suitable to this occasion, it suddenly struck me that the beautiful and chaste cross of gold on the cover of this book indicates more adequately than any words of mine what are our memories of Maude MacCallum. From the time when she entered the ranks of those who were working for the organisation of our profession, outstanding light-hearted courage, and the great free-will offering of sacrifice, marked every step of her journey; physical and mental suffering were her lot during nearly the whole of her subsequent life, and she faced both with a jaunty, gay courage that bespoke a spirit that had travelled to the freedom that lies beyond the personal.

I well recall my first meeting with Maude MacCallum. I had addressed the nurses at an institution with which she was connected, on matters relating to nursing politics at that time. She had been unable to attend, but had heard of my meeting next day and called to discuss what had been said. We talked over the main points, and the next day she came again to ask more questions. A day or so later she came in saying that she was convinced that, at that time, a Trade Union was needed for the nurses. Existing bodies, said she, were either "too autocratic or too aristocratic" to tackle the wrongs she would see put right; a progressive wing, was wanted, one that would be likely to attract the sympathy of the Labour Wing in the House of Commons. I pointed out that nurses would not join a Trade Union; her retort was that two hundred had already pledged themselves to do so and were willing each to give a certain sum to inaugurate the movement. Pessimistically I predicted that as soon as their economic position was threatened, when it became known that they were supporting such a movement, her followers would fall away. This happened, but, nothing daunted, she put her own capital into the banking account of the new organisation, perhaps with still very vague conceptions of what the cost of organisation means. She threw her Union at once into the State Registration Movement; no one was more indefatigable than she in lobbying Members of the Labour Party and of making capital out of every opportunity for getting publicity for the need for reforms in connection with nursing conditions.

Throughout the whole of the period during which she held a seat on the General Nursing Council hers was a voice never silent when there was need to defend the interests of her profession or the rights of the nurses.

There arrived a day when a message came to me from her

previous page

next page