

Royal British Nurses' Association.

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STEADFAST AND TRUE.

Emma Alice Cattell, S.R.N., F.B.C.N.

It is with deep regret that Members of the Association have received notice of the death of Miss Alice Cattell who has been a Member of the Corporation since 1893. During that time she has taken a keen interest in all its activities, has frequently served on its Council and Executive Committee and she held office as Nurse Hon. Secretary for two years. Miss Cattell was trained at St. George's Hospital and had a visiting nursing practice in the West End of London for many years. Few have been so successful in this branch of nursing work, partly, no doubt, because she was a very expert masseuse, but also because she had a way of gaining both the affection and confidence of her patients.

But Miss Cattell's interest lay beyond the boundaries of the personal. She was one of those who worked and paid for the achievement of legislation to provide for the Registration of Trained Nurses by the State and therefore her name stands in the history of the profession as one of the pioneers of progress; but when, in future ages, nurses scan the pages of the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING* to collect the history of the Registration Movement will they realise that this private nurse did not merely give of her best in the matter of attending meetings, and using such opportunities as came in her way, to promote professional progress, but that she sacrificed cheerfully, both time and money, that her younger colleagues, and those who would follow them, might inherit a profession recognised and established by Act of Parliament? She had the courage of her opinions always. It was the cause that mattered, not the individual, and she adhered loyally to her principles throughout the long struggle for the organisation of the profession. "She kept the faith," such in a few words is the judgment of her colleagues on Alice Cattell, and she would ask no better now that she has closed her earthly pilgrimage and passed from us on through the Gate of Death that is the way of life. Never did she swerve from her loyalty to the great principles upon which her party sought to lay the foundations of professional progress. There was no easy following of the majority, no discouragement in taking her place with the unpopular party in the make up of Alice Cattell, and while she served on the General Nursing Council she stood unswervingly for those principles which were calculated to preserve and protect the hard won qualifications of nurses who sought admission to the State Register.

But it is not merely as one who lifted responsibility and played her part in the making of professional history that we remember Miss Cattell. Through her death the sick and aged have lost a friend who never turned a deaf ear to their problems, never failed to hold out to them a helping hand. She had a seat on the Council of the Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund and worked constantly in its interests while our other Benevolent Funds had no more warm-hearted supporter. She was the most frequent visitor from the Association to the Settlement Home; many a time, her

sister tells us, she was urged to rest after a hard morning's work but she never failed to keep her word to the Members at the Home when she had promised to go down.

During an illness, extending over several years, she showed a cheerful courage which never once failed, even during the last sad stages of her suffering. In this connection we would quote the words of her dearest friend, Miss Bertha Lancaster (one who gave to her more consolation in those last sad days than any other) when she says in a letter: "Miss Cattell was a wonderful patient, calm and bright and appeared always to feel that everything was for the best. She was indeed most touchingly grateful for every little thing that one could do for her and it has been a great privilege to be able to help her. We shall miss her visits very much; she was always so full of zest and interest in everything and everybody." Mrs. Northwood, another friend, tells us how Miss Cattell asked that she might take her last dinner with the former before her operation and says she was the most cheerful of the party of friends who gathered to meet her, although she knew well that she might be meeting them all for the last time. We might quote, too, still another testimony to her high courage—the words of the surgeon, as he left her sickroom for the last time—"A courageous soul is there." Miss Cattell's colleagues in the R.B.N.A. and the British College of Nurses feel a great sense of gratitude to Mr. Barrington Ward, Dr. Wade (Anæsthetist) and Dr. Larkins, not only for having placed at the disposal of one of their colleagues their great professional skill, but for the generosity and kindness with which they gave up to her much precious time. Twice during a week-end in the country Mr. Barrington Ward journeyed to London to see her after the operation, and Dr. Larkins visited her sometimes four or five times a day, while Dr. Wade came three times and refused to leave (when the operation proved to be a long one), in order to keep an important appointment of his own. To a meeting of the Executive Committee the younger nurses at the Club sent up a request that a letter of appreciation be sent, to these medical men, from the Association, in acknowledgment of their wonderful kindness to one of our colleagues.

In her wish to spare trouble to others Miss Cattell had made all arrangements for her funeral down to the smallest detail and it was out of respect for her wishes that it was a private one. Besides her relatives Miss Bertha Lancaster attended it and Miss Isabel Macdonald represented the Association and the British College of Nurses. She was laid to rest in her mother's grave in the beautiful churchyard at Ilford and her last farewell from that part of London which knew her well was a characteristic one. As the cortege left the mortuary, where her remains had rested in a peaceful little chapel, an old nurse stood by the door, her eyes filled with tears, and, as the hearse moved off, she lifted worn fingers to her quivering lips and blew a kiss towards the flower covered coffin. No one knew who she was but that she represented a section of mourners was unconsciously

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