

## THE PASSING OF A GREAT SPIRIT.

DOROTHY SNELL, S.R.N., F.B.C.N.

On October 20th, at Rome, after acute suffering heroically borne, there entered into rest the sweet soul of Dorothy Snell, dear to many in this country, and in Italy, which she served so faithfully and loved so truly.

Trained at the London Homœopathic Hospital during the Matronship of Miss Brew, her teaching and that of Sister Olive and Sister Marian Rumball—shining examples of devotion to duty—fell on fertile soil. In 1895, Miss Snell joined the staff of the Registered Nurses' Society, then recently founded by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick to secure their own earnings to private nurses, and was one of a group who won for the Society the prestige it has ever since maintained, proving a very acceptable and successful private nurse. Later as a Member of the Army Nursing Service Reserve she served at Aldershot, and in South Africa in the Boer War.

It was in 1909 during the Congress of the International Council of Nurses in London that Miss Snell came into contact with Miss M. A. Turton, then Hon. Vice-President for Italy of the I.C.N., who had done valuable pioneer work for the advancement of trained nursing in Italy. Queen Elena was deeply interested in the question, and graciously agreed that a Nursing School then being formed—largely owing to the influential support of Princess Doria, a sister of the then Duke of Newcastle—should be named Scuola Convitto Regina Elena. Through the good offices of Miss Turton Miss Snell was selected Matron of the new School, and in 1910 inaugurated it with a staff of sixteen English trained sisters and twelve Italian pupils, the English nurses being gradually replaced by Italians as they proved themselves competent and suitable for promotion.

The life of a pioneer is never easy—Miss Snell's was no exception to this rule. A quarter of a century ago in Italy standards of nursing were undefined, the care of the sick was for the most part in the hands of the Religious Orders, and of the servant class. Miss Snell's special mission was to demonstrate the value of a thorough training both practical and theoretical, according to a defined curriculum, and to show to Italian girls, however high their station, that nursing affords a satisfying career of dignity and beauty, and an exceptional opportunity of service to humanity, a demonstration which she consistently made, until increasing illness obliged her to relinquish the task. In this work she had the support and appreciation of Queen Elena, the late Princess Doria, the Marchese Maraini, and other illustrious Italian ladies, as well as of members of the medical profession.

An unusual combination of qualities stood her in good stead. Of a gentle and sensitive disposition, where her

principles were involved she was adamant, inexorable. The word compromise was not in her vocabulary. As her pupils go out into the world to organise new schools they will realise increasingly that to raise nursing standards, and maintain them when raised, demands courage, discretion and determination of a very high order.

Miss Snell always kept up her interest in the English Nursing world, was a member of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and upon the foundation of the British College of Nurses early became a Fellow, in which she took a deep personal interest, constantly visiting it when in England.

In 1928, when the President of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, and other leading British Nurses, were officially invited to the International Congress on Tuberculosis at Rome, Miss Snell and the Marchesa Maraini, President of the Scuola Convitto Regina Elena, cordially invited twelve of them to stay at the School as their guests during the Congress—an invitation accepted with the greatest pleasure. Nothing could exceed the kindness and hospitality they received, not only from their kind hostesses but



The Casket being carried from the Scuola Convitto "Regina Elena," through the grounds of the Policlinico Hospital, to the Front Gate.

from the members of the Nursing Staff, who did their utmost to make the visit a memorable one.

It was evident that Miss Snell had the confidence, respect and affection of the Staff, and that the professional and ethical standards were admirable. Work founded on such sure foundations must live on through those who have come under her influence, and profited by her example, though not yet can its value be fully estimated.

During a year's painful illness, borne with unflinching courage and fortitude, during which time Queen Elena visited her frequently, she was surrounded with every care that skill and love could devise, till at length release came, and fortified with the rites of the Church which held her allegiance her gallant spirit passed on.

To the Nursing Staff of the Scuola Convitto Regina Elena we extend our affectionate sympathy in their great loss, with the assurance that they will continue the work of the Matron they loved so well, and honoured so deeply, as their best memorial to her.

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