

friends, a foreign travel tour enabled him to indulge his deep interest in historic battlefields.

"Sydney had been reading Kinglake, whose history of the Crimea awoke his interest in the scenes of Florence Nightingale's labours. They studied the Crimean scene with meticulous care and fought the famous engagements over again.

"When Sir Henry Holland in 1887 was offered and accepted a peerage, his seat as Hampstead's representative in Parliament was offered to his son, who refused it on the score of expense. Later in life, he reviewed the decision dispassionately. He came to speak easily and often in the Upper House and perhaps concluded that he might have found in the House of Commons a useful platform for his social causes. But on the whole he approved in retrospect the decision then made and was glad that he had been free to devote his whole energy to his life's work. In any case he never allowed himself to regret a decision once made.

"As early as 1879 he had begun a campaign which was to last for the rest of his life, as pamphleteer and press-letter-writer in scores of causes to which he gave his passionate interest. Anonymity he soon abandoned, and recognising the power of a pen forcibly and shrewdly employed, signed his name to innumerable exposes, appeals, theories and defences. . . . If he was compelled at first to overcome an inherited repugnance to personal publicity, the passion of his advocacy soon removed all scruples and he came to realise and be glad of the advertising value which attached to his name."

Of the many questions of the hour in the cause of which he entered the lists with his pen was the controversy of "Barristers' Honour." (A press symposium which long raged round the practice amongst busy barristers of accepting fees for work to which they could not give personal attention in court.) It is a practice which even yet is by no means obsolete.

"In 1888, as the result of an unfortunate accident, caused by a bolting pony, he was unconscious for three days and permanently lost his sense of smell and taste, and his natural tendency to deafness was accelerated.

In discharging his duties as a director of the India Dock Company, Sydney Holland began to see how bad were the conditions of life of the dockers. "It was, therefore, not so much chance as determination which led him to the Poplar Hospital to visit an employé who had been taken there after a bad accident. He found the man lying in filthy surroundings, verminous, half-starved and cold. He formed a very unfavourable opinion of the matron, and of the organisation of the hospital from top to bottom." Invited by the Annual General Meeting, which was adjourned for the purpose, to conduct an examination into the conditions, he found them very bad indeed and reported to the Committee. The Committee refused to support him and suggested that if he thought he could improve or put things right he had better try. He agreed to try.

"Within 14 days from the adjournment of the Annual Meeting (he tells us) he had sacked the Matron and every one of the nurses, and so dealt with the Resident Surgeon that he saw the error of his ways and amended them. The adjourned meeting took place, and the working men governors expressed complete satisfaction with what had been done. Considering the short time in which the new broom had been at work, a measure of admiration was justified."

It was in July, 1896, that he was elected to the Committee of the London Hospital, and shortly afterwards its Chairman; from that day it was his absorbing interest, and how magnificently he rescued it from disaster is so well known as to need no emphasis. "He drew from its sheath his fountain-pen and never relaxed his hold on it until he died fighting or writing for his hospital."

He used the pulpit, the press, the pen and the platform; he stated, rated, debated; he raised money and laughter and drew out cheques and tears. He had gained from his conjuring apprenticeship a score of valuable lights on human vanity and frailty, and he exploited human nature with a conjurer's genius. Sydney's extraordinary success as a beggar was due to his power of judging character.

Two aspects of his character are dealt with at some length. His home life as husband and father, and outside as neighbour and citizen. "There can be no dispute that as husband, father and head of his house, he was a rare example of almost complete perfection." Kneesworth Hall, Royston, which he built, grew and was completed under his guidance, and he came to love and rejoice in every brick and blade of grass that went to the making of his first and only real home.

When the Great War broke out the "London" offered 500 beds for wounded, to be equally divided between the Navy and Army, and later its Chairman organised and formed a committee to raise funds for a hospital for shell-shock cases. "Sydney was told that in the Boer War there were cases of neurasthenia which were never recognised as war-shock, and the doctors who approached him said it simply must not happen again." Sydney, when getting the sanction of the War Office, stipulated that he should manage his own committee absolutely free from red tape and interference. The scheme, therefore, was not under the Red Cross at any time, though grants were made by that body.

"At the conclusion of the War he received no word of thanks, no smallest acknowledgment of his ceaseless devotion to duty from those in authority. I do not know if he felt hurt; but he was human, and it would not be surprising if he felt the omission when one remembers the golden shower of rewards and favours broadcast after the War upon all and sundry."

When Lord Knutsford was taken suddenly ill at Kneesworth on July 5th, 1931, he was removed to the London Hospital and at once operated on for intestinal obstruction. He was almost ready for discharge when on July 27th a severe heart attack took him beyond the skill of doctors.

The end was surely as he would have wished, in the great hospital which is his best memorial, cared for by doctors and nurses whom he knew so well. Prolonged illness must have tried his energetic spirit. Far beyond the London Hospital, where the flag floated at half-mast, the tidings of his death were received with a sense of personal loss, and by none more sincerely than by the poor whose cause he espoused with such sympathy and tenderness, and with the success attendant on his originality, charm, and unsparing personal service. M. B.

#### THE PASSING BELL.

We record with sincere regret the death on June 12th, in Malta, of Mrs. A. E. Coldwell (*née* Rutherford), M.B.E., R.R.C., late Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, after a long illness.

Trained in the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary and in the Seamen's Hospital, Greenwich, Mrs. Coldwell was appointed Staff Nurse in Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service in July, 1907, and promoted to the rank of Sister in May, 1917. She served at home, in China, and in H.M.A.T. *Assaye*, and resigned from the Service in August, 1920, on account of her marriage. For her devotion to duty during the Great War she was awarded the Royal Red Cross in July, 1919. For her valuable services to the people of Malta, His late Majesty King George appointed her a Member of the Order of the British Empire in June, 1933. Mrs. Coldwell was one of the best-known and best-loved English residents in Malta. Her spontaneous good nature and charming personality endeared her to a wide circle of friends, by whom her death will be very deeply regretted.

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