

SISTER DORA.

THE ANNUAL CIVIC RECOGNITION OF HER SERVICES TO WALSALL.

Townfolk of Walsall, faithful to the memory of their much loved Sister Dora (Dorothy Wyndlow Pattison), Matron of the Walsall Cottage Hospital (now the General Hospital) from 1865 to 1878, assembled round her statue on the Bridge on Thursday, January 16th, Sister Dora's birthday, for the annual ceremonial commemoration, with civic recognition of her services to the town.

The Mayor, Councillor H. G. J. Fletcher, presided at the ceremony, and the town's tribute, a basket of lovely scarlet carnations and maidenhair fern, was laid by the Mayoress, Miss Fletcher. The card attached stated that this tribute was in proud and happy memory of Sister Dora from the Mayor and townspeople of Walsall, and that "her noble and self-sacrificing labours in the cause of the sick and suffering endeared her to the hearts of Walsall people, and adorned with signal honour the Nursing Profession, and Walsall people delight to honour her memory."

The Borough Member, Alderman J. A. Leckie, M.P., and Mrs. Leckie sent a wreath of pink carnations inscribed: "A floral tribute to the unfading and glorious memory of Sister Dora. . . . She worked much, suffered much, and accomplished much." This was laid by Miss Holloway, for many years Lady Superintendent of the Walsall Victoria Nursing Institution, who was accompanied by the present Superintendent, Miss Hall, and amongst other tributes was one from the Walsall General Hospital of red and purple tulips, laid by the Matron, Miss A. Strachan, and one from the Municipal Health Visitors and School Clinic Nurses, a charming sheaf of red tulips.

The Mayor, addressing those present, said that they were gathered to pay tribute to the memory of a noble woman, and he hoped nothing in the future would ever interfere with the ceremony.

Councillor Fletcher went on to recall a strange and interesting incident during his life on the Gold Coast. Twenty-seven years ago, he said, he was visiting the Basil Mission Station on the West Coast of Africa, not knowing the day or the date. The principal was giving a lecture on Sister Dora to the local grammar school. The principal made errors due to his faulty books, but at the end of his address when it was learned that he (Councillor Fletcher) came from Walsall he was asked to supplement the principal's remarks.

"I didn't correct the headmaster in front of his class, but I told him of his mistakes when we were at dinner that evening," the Mayor said. Later, when he got to England again he sent out literature and photographs to

the principal, who had written to him expressing his thanks.

A letter from the Secretary of the British College of Nurses conveyed a message from the President (Mrs. Bedford Fenwick) saying how glad she was that the people of Walsall were continuing to honour the birthday of Sister Dora, so honouring her great work and personality, and asking whether the question of having a small plaster statuette of Sister Dora had ever been considered, which could be bought for a few shillings, such as that which was now being sold to help the Florence Nightingale International Scholarships Fund.

The House Governor of the Walsall General Hospital, Mr. Walter Francombe, in expressing his thanks to Mr. Fred Bull for his gift to the Hospital of a photograph of the presentation of a pony and carriage to Sister Dora in 1870,

reported: "The picture will be of great historic interest, and I mean to try to identify the various people in the group."

The Mayor and people of Walsall are to be congratulated on keeping green the memory of this devoted Nurse and Matron, one of the early pioneers who, following the example of Florence Nightingale, did marvellous work for the care of the sick of their day. Sister Dora was not only a great nurse but had a great, original, and sympathetic personality, and so secured the devotion and the well-being of the patients in her charge.

The cottage hospital of Sister Dora's day, is at the present time an important general hospital, contains 142 beds, entailing the maintenance of a nursing staff, in addition to the matron, of 10 sisters and 53 nurses. The Chairman is Alderman Ernest H. Ingram. How she would have rejoiced in its extended power of usefulness.

Miss Margaret Lonsdale (Sister Dora's biographer), writes of her: "Her indomitable will, which no earthly power could subdue or master, though it was one

of her greatest gifts and enabled her to accomplish an almost superhuman work, yet became to her, on several occasions, the cause of her greatest difficulties.

"Her strong power of personal influence—that subtle, many sided, most doubtful of blessings to the possessor—was not without its snares for her—signal gifts, whether physical, mental or moral, bring with them such heavy responsibilities that they must have their counterbalancing disadvantages."

The late Arthur Brockhurst, J.P., thus describes her:—

She saw deep things that never could be told;
That made her wise, and gave her heart of gold
Its healing power;
But O, the Mother-thought that made the deed so
kind,
And O, the magic touch that soothed the fevered
mind
In Death's dark hour.



SISTER DORA OF UNFADING MEMORY.

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