

# Royal British Nurses' Association.

Incorporated by



Royal Charter.

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

## HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRESIDENT.

We have pleasure in being able to reproduce this month a photograph of Her Royal Highness the Princess Arthur of Connaught, R.R.C., S.R.N. As is well known the Princess is an enthusiast in her profession and has for some time been taking Sister's duty in a hospital which was prepared to take casualties soon after the outbreak of war.

## MARGARET BREAY—AN APPRECIATION.

There passed from the earth at Christmas-time one who has been a very living personality and influence in the story of our profession both at home and abroad for half-a-century—Margaret Breay. She gave freely to the profession, throughout the years, gifts that flowed from a fine culture and high literary talent. Her writings were always of crystal clarity, meticulous in their details and possessed of a great historical value that will not fail to prove of lasting importance in the future because of the persevering adherence to facts that was always bestowed upon any article or manuscript that came from her pen. Perhaps only in the future will her work come to be assessed at its real value when nurse historians of later times explore the origins of the various impulses that have led to the development of nursing organisation. Then her pen will play its part, as in a kind of metamorphosis, when its fruits are set in the perspective of time and history is retold in a scientific way rather than as a mere *fable convenue*.

Miss Breay was one of those who sought to see "good in everything." How often when she heard of some movement affecting the profession and of which she could not approve in its entirety, she would select points that would lead to progress and draw them into the light; but to what was undeniably wrong or retrograde, she offered unequivocal opposition that knew no compromise. In a sense Miss Breay might be said to have formed part of the soul of the profession for, to a mind very spiritual in its type she united ethical and moral conceptions that pressed deeply into her professional life both as a nurse and a journalist. Few have felt more enthusiastically towards their professions than she, whether it might be that of Nursing or of Letters. Few have made greater sacrifices for their profession, and perhaps, in the ultimate, few have reaped more happiness from it.

Miss Breay was a signatory to our Royal Charter of Incorporation and on many occasions since then her signature has appeared on documents, manuscripts and in the annals of nursing and its organisation. It is with sincere sorrow that we record her death, in this the Official Organ of the Association, and we couple with this expression of sorrow and loss one of deep sympathy with Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, who has not only lost a beloved friend but a loyal comrade whose pen, energy and ability were

ever at her service in all the stress of journalistic activity that has filled her life. Through the illness and death of Miss Breay the Association has lost an able Member of its Council and Executive Committee and one whose gentle presence was rarely absent from any gathering of importance at 194, Queen's Gate. At the Memorial Service the Association was represented by the Secretary and a chaplet of beautiful pink chrysanthemums was sent in appreciation of her memory.

## CHRISTMAS-TIME ACTIVITIES.

### CHRISTMAS DAY.

Christmas at Headquarters was distinctly less hilarious this year than in others, as was to be expected. The dinner party of about twenty was the smallest we have had since we came to Queen's Gate, and we missed many of the young people especially, who used to be able to secure a Christmas "off duty" but who "joined up" at the beginning of war. Then some who had intended coming in from other parts of the town were prevented from doing so owing to the heavy fog which grew thicker towards night.

The postman's arrival at intervals was not accompanied by quite the excitement and "thrill" that usually characterise it at Christmas-time, but the circle round the fire had the Christmas spirit just the same, and all the morning we heard greetings of good-will being exchanged as people came and went. That hall fire is the most popular *rendezvous* for Members from outside as well as inside. As a war economy it was suppressed until Christmas Day, but once lit it is decreed that "the home fire" must be kept burning to cheer all comers. Miss Treasure, that lady who "doeth good by stealth," was busy while others slept, and when we came down on Christmas morning the light of the flames was gleaming on the holly and other evergreens, which, if in less profusion than in other years, made our surroundings appear as lovely as ever. Also we would thank many who have sent gifts to add to the enjoyment of Members who were in residence.

This year it was decided not to have the usual toasts, which, after the first one or two, are apt to come somewhat promiscuously and spontaneously from those assembled at the dinner party. Only one toast was honoured and it was proposed by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick—"Their Majesties the King and Queen," and this she coupled with the Fighting Services.

One of the chief delights of this fog-enveloped Christmas season was the fine programmes of music provided by the B.B.C. "Let music sound," says Shakespeare, and nothing could have been more acceptable in these days of darkness and the haunting memories of the tragedies of the sea. The spell of the music surrounded us and brought to mind a belief that some hold to be true—that as the human voice or some instrument "disperses" its notes, the spirits of the air capture them and throw them back to us again.

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