

WHO WAS EDITH CAVELL?

It is almost incredible that a Registered Nurse was recently heard to ask the question: "Who was Edith Cavell?" Apparently the same ignorance pertains in other parts of the world. This should not be.

We are pleased to note in *Una*, the journal of the Royal Victorian College of Nursing, that the annual commemorative service of the Edith Cavell Trust, a fund for the assistance to Sick and Incapacitated Military Nurses in Australia, was held on Anzac Day in Melbourne. This service not only commemorates the supreme sacrifice paid by Edith Cavell, but also the passing of several Victorian Nurses who were on active service in the Great War. So many hospitals' nurses' organisations in English-speaking countries are beginning to take a practical interest in modern nursing history that we reprint, for their benefit, the following note which appeared in *Una* in April last.

NURSE EDITH CAVELL.

While the name of Edith Cavell rings in the ears of military nurses of the Great War, there are very many of the junior members of the profession to whom it is not even known. Actually the name stands only second to that of Florence Nightingale, another woman whom war made notable.

Edith Louisa Cavell was born in Norfolk in 1865 and trained at the London Hospital in 1895. She became the first matron, in 1907, of Berkendael Medical Institute, Brussels, which became a Red Cross Hospital upon the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. From November, 1914 to July, 1915, wounded and wandering English and French soldiers were hidden from Germany by Prince Reginald de Croy at his chateau near Mons, thence to the houses of Nurse Edith Cavell and others in Brussels. Here they were given money and food to reach the Dutch frontier with the aid of guides supplied by Philippe Bancq.

Edith Cavell secretly aided some 200 allied soldiers to escape from hospitals and internment camps, and for this, on August 5th she was arrested and the intrepid woman admitted her action. A Belgian lawyer, M. Sadi Kirshen, defended her. On October 9th she and Philippe Bancq were condemned to death while three others implicated were reprieved. Efforts were made on her behalf by the United States Minister in Brussels, Mr. Brand Whitcock, but without avail. She was shot on October 12th, 1915. Nurse Cavell had tended many German soldiers with devotion and care. She faced the firing squad with a dignity that thrilled the whole civilised world. On receiving the sacrament she said: "Patriotism is not enough," and these words have become as historic as Nelson's famous message on the eve of Trafalgar.

On May 19th, 1919, Nurse Edith Cavell's remains were moved to Norwich Cathedral after a service in Westminster Abbey. A memorial to her was erected in London, opposite the National Portrait Gallery and near Trafalgar Square.

Another memorial nearer home is the Trust Fund bearing her name for the assistance of Victorian military nurses who, through illness or failing strength, may require help. This fund was collected by the generosity of Victorian men and women anxious to recognise practically the work being accomplished by all nurses on active service or on home service in military hospitals or camps.

(It is not known whether the nurses in the present conflict are covered by the terms of the Constitution of the Trust.)

On Anzac Day, April 25th, the memory of Edith Cavell is honoured annually. Her memorial is the scene of a

brief, impressive service. With each year, an increased number of men and women show their respect to the memory of a brave woman whose sacrifice they recognise by placing beautiful flowers at the foot of the pedestal on which the bust of Edith Cavell is placed. This is erected at the entrance to Melbourne, a stone's throw from Prince's Bridge on St. Kilda Road.

Early in May, 1929, a letter received from the Rev. G. D'Arcy Blackman, St. Clement's Rectory, Norwich, tells of the discovery—quite accidental—of Nurse Cavell's baptism in St. Swithin's font in his church. Looking for the record of another baptism, he found this entry: "Date: Feb. 28th, 1861. Names—Edith. Parents' names—Robert Corry and Emma Caroline. Surname—Cavell. Residence—Heigham. Officiating Minister—Rt. Corry Cavell.

Mr. Cavell baptised his son Alexander, Edith's brother, in the same font the previous year. (We note a difference in the year.) The font, of considerable beauty, was carefully restored during the reign of Charles II and is octagonal in shape. There are four shields showing emblems of the Passion, the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Sacrament and the Three Crowns of East Anglia. The four alternate sides are carved with lions.

A DAY TO BE HONOURED.

As we go to press the fatal hour is drawing near when, on October 12th, 1915, the German firing squad murdered Edith Cavell in Brussels. We have a fine monument erected to her memory near Trafalgar Square, London, which we shall hope to see fittingly decorated with flowers in honour of one of the world's most heroic nurses.

THE PASSING BELL.

MISS MARIAN SCOTT RIDDELL, R.R.C., S.R.N.

The death of Miss Marian Scott Riddell, R.R.C., took place at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, on September 22nd last, after a long illness.

Miss Riddell was trained at St. Bartholomew's Hospital and was later Assistant Matron at University College Hospital, and was actively on duty during the Great War. In 1920 Miss Riddell was appointed the first Registrar of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, from which honourable position she was retired in 1934.

A service was held in the Church of St. Bartholomew the Less on September 25th, which was attended by many professional friends.

MISS L. M. A. PAINTER.

The death is announced by the War Office of Miss M. L. A. Painter, Q.A.I.M.N.S., while serving in India.

Miss Painter was trained at the Royal Free Hospital from 1925 to 1929. She joined Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service on May 1, 1929, and was posted to the Indian Establishment in 1930 where she remained till April, 1936.

In February, 1939, she was again sent to India for her second tour of foreign service.

Miss Painter was an excellent nurse and always bright, cheerful and energetic. She will be greatly missed by her colleagues in India, and her untimely death is a loss to the Service in general.

MISS E. M. LYDE, O.B.E.

We regret to record the death, on May 25th, 1941, of Miss E. M. Lyde, O.B.E., late Q.A.I.M.N.S.

She served for many years in Q.A.I.M.N.S., and was promoted Sister on June 8th, 1908. She was awarded the O.B.E. for her valuable services.

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