

OBITUARY.

MISS SILVIA HELEN VIAN, S.R.N., F.B.C.N.,
Q.A.I.M.N.S.R.

He is not dead

Who in his record still the earth shall tread
With God's clear aureole shining round his head.

Whittier.

A great spirit indeed has passed from the ranks of our profession through the death, on October 16th, at a comparatively early age, of Miss Silvia Vian, who was, for eight years, Matron of the Royal United Hospital, Bath. Miss Vian was a sister of Rear-Admiral Philip Vian (known in the Service as "Vian of the 'Cossack'") who, during the last few days of Miss Vian's lifetime, received the second bar to his D.S.O. The achievements of her illustrious brother, we have been told, were a source of deep joy to her during these last weeks of terrible suffering, which she bore with a courage that matched his own. It has comforted her friends to know with what loving care she was tended, in the nursing home which she chose, throughout all the months of waiting and suffering until, just a few days before her death, she became unconscious and her spirit gently wafted its way into—immortality.

During the last war Miss Vian served in a Voluntary Aid Detachment in the Red Cross Hospital at Dunkirk. When she returned she entered the Victoria Hospital, Chelsea, for training in the nursing of sick children. From there she went on, for general training, to Guy's Hospital, and later took a course of Housekeeping at University College Hospital. She became a Ward Sister at the Royal Waterloo Hospital, and then went to Charing Cross Hospital, where she served as Ward Sister, Night Superintendent, Home Sister, and then as Assistant Matron. From that Hospital she went to the Royal United Hospital, Bath, as Matron, having been chosen out of 50 applicants.

Her Matronship covered an important period in the history of the hospital, for it was during this time that it removed to the fine buildings in Coombe Park from the old one in Beau Street.

When Miss Vian retired from the Matronship there was a great meeting in the Guildhall, Bath, when she was presented with an illuminated address and other tokens of regard in appreciation of her work for the sick in the town. We could find no better words in which to express an estimate of her character and individuality than by quoting a paragraph from this address:—

"To those who know you and your work it is abundantly clear that the guiding motive of your life is that of pure, unselfish, public spirit, expressed in the desire to combat

disease and alleviate suffering wherever you find it. We have valued your capability, but no less the fine understanding sympathy given so constantly to your patients and their friends, many of whom never forget your quiet, strengthening influence in their hour of trial."

National Service.

From January to October, 1938, Miss Vian was a Principal Matron of the Territorial Army Nursing Service. On the outbreak of war she joined Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve, and served with the British Expeditionary Force in France, where her patriotic and unceasing sense of duty was a great example and of national value. The Matron-in-Chief, Q.A.I.M.N.S., places on record "that Miss Vian's outstanding capabilities and charming personality makes her passing one of much regret to her many colleagues and personal friends."

In the Sunshine.

The funeral service of Miss Vian, by her own wish, took place at Bathampton Church, which lies in lovely country, and her grave at the foot of the War Memorial in the little cemetery was beautifully lined with flowers, moss and laurel leaves, and the base of the memorial was one lovely mass of flowers sent as tributes of affection from many friends.

The Union Jack covered the coffin as it was carried to the grave by non-commissioned officers of the R.A.M.C. In the sunshine the scene was one of serenity and peace.

Amongst those who attended the funeral were Rear-Admiral Philip Vian, D.S.O., hero of the "Altmark" drama; Captain Vian, of the Irish Guards; the Mayor of Bath; many members of the medical profession; and representatives of Nurses' organisations.

The British College of Nurses, of which Miss Vian was a valued Fellow for many years—she had served on its Council—was represented by Miss G. M. Hardy, S.R.N., Matron of the Battersea General Hospital; the Royal British Nurses' Association, by Miss

Goodrich, S.R.N., Matron of the Church Street Nursing Home, Bath; and Miss G. C. Ball, Principal Matron Q.A.I.M.N.S., represented the Matron-in-Chief.

Silvia Vian's portrait on this page is characteristic of her fine character and classic beauty. We can ill spare women of this type in the Nursing Profession to-day.

AN APPRECIATION.

THE LATE MISS SILVIA HELEN VIAN, S.R.N., F.B.C.N.

Tidings of heavy omen have come amongst us, and we grieve and cannot be comforted, for there is none like her. Memories of her crowd into the imagination, and in spirit we rebel against our loss, for never again shall we thrill to



THE LATE MISS SILVIA HELEN VIAN,
S.R.N., F.B.C.N., Q.A.I.M.N.S.R.

Formerly Matron of the Royal United Hospital, Bath.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)