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EDITORIAL.

LET US PRAISE GREAT WOMEN.

"A SHORT HISTORY OF SIR PATRICK DUN'S HOSPITAL, DUBLIN."

We have been greatly interested in reading "A Short History of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin," commonly known as "Paddy Dun's," although its illustrious founder was a typical Scot from Aberdeen, born in the year 1642.

We noted in a review of this work that a chapter dealt with the "Nursing Arrangements," and that the fine pioneer work in this connection of Margaret Huxley, as Matron, was sympathetically recognised.

We first came into association with this remarkable woman in the year 1881—(how time flies)—when, having been Matron of "Barts," for two days—the lady in question, then a probationer, asked for an interview, at which we were greatly impressed. Here we came face to face with a strong young woman. She had a grievance (a justifiable one). She very ably stated her case, and we had pleasure in removing the cause of her discontent.

Sixty years ago the Assistant Nurse was with us—her title at Barts. in those days was "The Extra." She presented herself for night duty at 8 p.m., dressed in brown merino, black chenille cap and apron, supped, and was directed to duty to any overcrowded ward—30 patients to one night nurse—as found convenient. These good women, having already done a laborious day's domestic work, were often buoyed up with a "sip of gin in me tea," and a highly-educated regular probationer naturally resented being placed on "Extra" night duty to run around with them.

Margaret Huxley had not only been classed as an "Extra," but realised that her professional status as a regular probationer in an honourable profession was at stake.

A stickler for organisation, the new Matron was happy indeed to realise she had power to rectify this blunder. Two years later, in 1884, Margaret Huxley was appointed Lady Superintendent of the Eye and Ear Infirmary, Molesworth Street, Dublin, and having shown in that capacity ability of a remarkable order, she was appointed Lady Superintendent of Nurses at Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital.

The chapter on "Nursing Arrangements," in Dr. Thomas Gillman Moorhead's "Short History of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital" is very interesting and informative to those nurses who have watched the uprise and downfall of nursing standards in Great Britain. Of Miss Huxley's work, he writes: "When appointed as Lady Superintendent of the hospital, in 1884, Miss Huxley was already well known in Dublin. . . . With this appointment a new era of hospital nursing, which the Governors had long desired to bring about really began." Miss Huxley was, indeed, the pioneer of modern nursing in Dublin. She soon brought about revolutionary changes in the nursing arrangements of the hospital, and placed Sir Patrick Dun's School of Nursing in the very forefront of Nursing Schools in this country. Amongst other things, she established courses of lectures in elementary anatomy for the nurses, these duties being

added to the duties of the house surgeon. In subsequent years courses of lectures were added in many other subjects, and a Metropolitan School of Nursing was founded, largely on Miss Huxley's initiative, where these lectures were delivered. The term of training was extended from one to two years. . . . It became essential to obtain a separate Nurses' Home . . . at subsequent periods during the next 35 years—the entire block, from 96 to 102, Lower Mount Street, became hospital property.

In March, 1891, Miss Huxley's salary was raised from £100 to £125, "in recognition of her zeal." (Shades of Rushcliffe!)

On Miss Huxley's retirement in 1902, her past and present nurses subscribed a sum of money with the object of giving her a presentation. She, however, refused to accept any personal gift, and consequently the money was used in the establishment of a Margaret Huxley Memorial Medal, which is awarded every second year to the nurse who gets highest place for conduct in her examinations.

In 1912, Miss Huxley was elected a Member of the Board of Governors, being the first woman to be elected on the Board.

In 1928, the University of Dublin conferred on Miss Huxley the Honorary Degree of M.A., in recognition of her valuable work "for Scientific Nursing in Ireland." In answering a letter of congratulation, she said: "I feel the University, by their action, has honoured all nurses, and I hope we shall continue to deserve the good opinion of our work."

She died on January 10, 1940, having spent a lifetime in the uplift of the profession of which she was so distinguished a member, and in all those years we kept in touch with her, realising the eminence of her character and her career. Indeed, association between the pioneers of nursing reform in England and Ireland for half a century was of the most cordial nature, and many gay and happy gatherings forged warm friendship between Registrationists on both sides of the Irish Sea.

In the sympathetic obituary notice of Margaret Huxley, by Miss Alice Reeves, which appeared in this JOURNAL, in February, 1940, a record of a noble life is presented for the emulation of members of our profession. Never was it more urgent for the present generation of nurses to read, mark, and learn the lessons to be gathered from the devotion to duty of our selfless pioneers.

The hospitals of Dublin owe Dr. Moorhead a debt of gratitude for his exceedingly interesting work on Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, and nurses will be interested in the chapter dealing with the Nursing arrangements. Of course, there is only one Margaret Huxley in its long list of Matrons. We advise that this work should find an honoured place in the Nurses' libraries. It is good to praise great women.

We are pleased to know that short biographies of our leaders in many countries—the majority of whom have passed to higher spheres of work—are to be compiled and published in one volume. It will inspire us to reclaim and regain what we have lost through the disastrous legislation of the Nurses Act, 1943.

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