

#### AN ARDENT ROYALIST.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick was a most loyal and ardent Britisher, and an enthusiastic Royalist. Each and every tiny detail which related to the activities of our Royal Family was scanned with eagerness and intense interest. Nothing delighted her more than to see beautiful photographs portraying the happy family life of our King and Queen and the two Princesses. She reported outstanding Royal events with joy and alacrity and was dismayed when misfortune or illness affected any Royal person.

During the late war she derived the greatest pleasure from the sure signs of public love and veneration which were directed towards their Majesties, and she was furious when German bombs fell anywhere near Royal residences, which seemed to her to be a sacrilege. The presence of the Queen in London worried her a good deal and she always maintained that Her Majesty's life was in unnecessary danger.

One of her last acts was to present Louis Wulff's "Queen of To-morrow" to the Presidents of Nursing Associations of the British Empire and America, so that life details of Princess Elizabeth would be familiar to her future subjects and friends. Mrs. Fenwick's loyalty to her country was most passionate and intense, and never would she tolerate the slightest word or suggestion of disloyalty. Her proudest boast was that she was British.

#### HER ACCIDENT, LONG ILLNESS AND DEATH.

On June 22nd, 1946, as Mrs. Fenwick was going home to lunch, she slipped and fell heavily. With her usual dogged obstinacy, she attempted to rise, and could not; thereupon she suffered herself to be helped. On arrival at the Royal British Nurses Association—her home for many years—she was helped into bed and found to have sustained a badly fractured femur. She was 89 years old. Her consternation knew no bounds, and the pain she suffered was an agony. Fortunately she was in the capable hands of Miss Isabel Macdonald, S.R.N., the very able Secretary of the R.B.N.A., and through her services the best medical advice was obtained.

As it was impossible for her to be nursed in her own room, she was transferred to a private room, off Lawrence Ward, in St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where in her very young days she had reigned as Matron. Very shortly afterwards it was realised that her fracture would not unite, and although nothing was said, Mrs. Fenwick quite realised her condition. She suffered a great deal of pain, and she suffered a great deal more mentally.

For some time she kept abreast with current Nursing affairs, and tried to revivify her aged body with her still fervent spirit and strong determination. But, insidiously, the unequal battle of mind over matter began to go against the ancient warrior. Slowly and imperceptibly she was seen to be losing ground daily and she fretted anxiously at her bonds and wished to be free. She was nursed with the greatest kindness and gentleness, and the Nurses at "Barts" spared themselves no effort to obtain the maximum amount of comfort for her.

After five months, she wished ardently for a change of surroundings and general environment, and fortu-

nately for her, Mrs. Mabel Barber, S.R.N., Vice-President of the British College of Nurses, Ltd, and wife of the Vicar of London Colney, was able to offer her the hospitality of her own home. Thither she went by ambulance on November 6th, 1946, and thus she came, in great pain, to her last home on this earth of ours. For some time again she appeared to rally, and once more she interested herself in Nursing affairs—this time in her own "special" International Congress which takes place in May of this year.

Her 90th birthday came round on January 26th, and she received many little tokens, and cables from friends abroad. She seemed a little happier, receiving as usual great kindness and many little home comforts which Mrs. Barber, in her great generosity, was able to bestow on her.

But her rally was only short-lived and gradually she became weaker. Early in March she was worrying about the sad state of her beloved country. She was intensely proud of her British nationality and desperately concerned about the troubles of England. So grateful was she, at the generosity of the peoples of the Empire towards the Motherland, that she requested the March Editorial be written on this subject. She fretted at not being able to write it herself. The fate of England was her last big concern, and she became unconscious on March 10th, and never recovered. She died on the evening of March 13th, at 10.30 p.m., and at long last that courageous and indomitable spirit found rest.

A touching last act of homage, and one for which we are profoundly grateful, came from her Doctor. When she was laid out for burial, he pinned two glorious orchids on to her breast. He had grown them himself.

After the sad news of her death had been broadcast, many cablegrams of sympathy were received by her relatives, and by the British College of Nurses, from all parts of the world.

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Her earthly remains were cremated at Golders Green, on Tuesday, March 18th, at 2.30 p.m. Wide-spread floods, following upon our savage winter, prevented her body being taken North to her family burial ground. A simple little ceremony preceded the cremation. Her coffin looked very small as two sweet posies from her family rested upon it.

Members of her family, with friends and representatives from important Nursing Associations were present in the West Chapel.

The next morning, March 19th, at 11 o'clock, a Memorial Service was held at St. Bartholomew's Hospital (in the Church of St. Bartholomew-the-Less). Beautiful flowers from friends lent a lingering fragrance and increased the air of hope and expectation. The Service was dignified and the sweet voices of young Nurses added to the sense of fitness and reverence. Amongst the congregation of mourners were members of her family, Mr. and Mrs. Christian Bedford Fenwick and her two grandsons; also eminent members of Nurses' Associations, including the Council of the British College of Nurses.

"Eternal Rest grant unto her, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon her."

GLADYS M. HARDY.

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