

OBITUARY

LILIAN LINDSAY, C.B.E.,
LL.D., M.D.S., F.D.S., H.D.D.,
F.S.A.

ON Sunday, January 31, our beloved Lilian died.

Born in north London in the year 1871, Lilian Murray was one of a large family, and three of its members were to attain distinction in widely different callings: Lilian in dentistry; one of her sisters as the first matron of the Robert Jones Orthopaedic Hospital; another on the London stage. Her father was a professional musician, and music held an abiding interest in the family. Many will remember hearing Mrs. Lindsay in her sixties sing the toothdrawer's song in the course of her paper "The Sun, the Toothdrawer, and the Saint" delivered to the Section of Odontology of the Royal Society of Medicine in 1933.

A pupil of the North London Collegiate School for Young Ladies, which, under the redoubtable Miss Buss, produced so many women of note, Lilian Murray, faced with the proposal by her headmistress that she should embark on a new career for women in the training of deaf children, replied, as she often recounted, "I am going to be a dentist." Miss Buss was delighted, and said "And so you shall, my dear." Efforts to gain admission to London dental schools failed, but Edinburgh accepted her, and she qualified in 1895.

Lilian Murray practised in north London until her marriage in 1905 to Robert Lindsay, whom she had first met as one of her teachers, and whom she then joined in practice in Edinburgh. In 1920, when Lindsay became the first Dental Secretary of the Association, they made their home at the headquarters in Russell Square. It is typical of their attitude to ethics and what they

regarded as a duty to their patients, that they refused to sell their practice, but advised their patients as to the names of other practitioners who would agree to attend them. Looking back in later years Dr. Lindsay paid a moving tribute to her husband, without whose help she said she would have been nothing. It was a true marriage of service each for the other. It was not until Robert Lindsay died in the autumn of 1930 that Lilian Lindsay allowed her independent spirit full rein. She had been content to labour for her profession through her husband. With his passing it was as though she sought to assuage her loss by her work for the Association which became to her, as it had been to him, an all-absorbing passion.

We are too near the event to assess the true impact of Lilian Lindsay on the career of dentistry for women. She maintained a roll of women dentists and once claimed that she felt she was the mother of them all, if not the grandmother. She acclaimed each distinction gained by her professional sisters, and took great pride in the happy coincidence that during her presidential visits she, the first woman president of the Association, was received by the first woman president of a provincial Branch.

It is less difficult to assess her work for the Association of which she became a member as soon as she qualified. Through her association with Robert Lindsay she took a keen interest in the dento-political problems of that period, among which was the long drawn-out, bitterly fought battle over membership, and the development of various forms of public service. But it will be by her devotion to the creation of a dental library which will be of lasting service to the profession that she will ever be remembered.

With the strong support of Dolamore she started in 1920 with



a small collection of books bequeathed by Gaddes. She then taught herself the routine work of librarianship, she studied assiduously in the Reading Room of the British Museum, she gained a sound knowledge of French and German, a working knowledge of Spanish and Anglo-Saxon. Her collection gradually expanded, and from time to time she added valuable first editions of British and foreign dental works. Far into the night she would work, and she produced innumerable original communications bearing on the history of her profession, each involving painstaking research. Among her larger publications were "A Short History of Dentistry" and her scholarly translation of Fauchard's "The Surgeon Dentist."

Throughout her years with the Association she was of constant help to the Journal, and in 1931 was appointed sub-editor, a post she occupied for just over 20 years. At the time of her death she was still a member of the Editorial Committee.

Honours were showered upon Lilian Lindsay in her later years. Edinburgh conferred upon her the LL.D., the F.D.S. and the H.D.D. The University of Dur-

ham conferred the degree of M.D.S., and the Royal College of Surgeons of England the Fellowship in Dental Surgery, and the Colyer Gold Medal. The Society of Antiquaries elected her a Fellow. She had been President of the Metropolitan Branch, and later, President of the Association, of which she was first a Life and then an Honorary Member. She was President of the B.S.S.O., President of the Odontological Section and the History of Medicine Section of the Royal Society of Medicine, later an Honorary Member of the former. She was an Honorary Member of the Odonto-Chirurgical Society of Scotland, a Vice-President of the Johnson Society, an Honorary Member of the Edinburgh Women Students and an Honorary Member of the American Academy of the History of Dentistry.

Of her many honours, her appointment in 1946 to be a Commander of the most excellent Order of the British Empire and the presentation to her in September last year, of the Colyer Gold Medal gave her the greatest joy, since to her the first represented Royal recognition of the place of women in dentistry, and the second marked her long and close association with Sir Frank Colyer.

Two portraits of Lilian Lindsay are left to us. That by the late T. C. Dugdale, presented to her in 1951, failed to record her charm; the other by Kathleen Williams in 1942, painted against the background of the Robert and Lilian Lindsay Library, caught with success the alert expression users of the library knew so well.

Writing in the Journal in 1951, Mr. F. J. Ballard aptly quoted G. K. Chesterton, "To my way of thinking, a great Librarian must have a clear head, a strong hand, and, above all, a great heart. When I look into the future I am inclined to think that most of the men who will achieve this greatness will be women." In a later issue Mr. B. R. Townend, quoting

Steele, wrote "To have loved her was a liberal education."

W. G. S.

MISS MILDRED STILL writes:

ABLER and more senior members of the dental profession will pay tribute to her academic achievements, but I know that I shall be speaking for a very great number of the older women students when I try to express my humble and grateful thanks, for thirty years' unflinching friendship and help, from Lilian Lindsay, a kindly, witty, and loved mentor.

DR. MARIE L. V. GAYLER writes:

MAY I be permitted to pay a small tribute on the occasion of the death of Lilian Lindsay.

I first came into contact with Dr. Lindsay about 1933, when I was carrying out research on dental amalgams at the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington, under the auspices of the Dental Board of the United Kingdom and, therefore, needed the facilities of a dental library.

Dr. Lindsay gave me every help and encouragement over many years, but I think that what impressed me most was the fact that in spite of all her wisdom, she took a real personal interest in the work of someone who was so much her junior in every way.

Dr. Lindsay was a great advocate of the clinical application of the results of my researches, and I shall always remember her with gratitude and admiration. Her gentle manner hid great strength of character and to have known her was a great honour.

MR. S. SOUTHWOOD writes:

IT is difficult to realise that Lilian Lindsay has left us, and how much poorer we all are indeed for her loss. To some she must be a legend that reached back into the Russell Square days. Those of us who were privileged to be more contemporary must now look in vain for the smiling

wisdom and warm enthusiasm that stamped visits to Hill Street.

Thanks to her we enjoyed so many advantages, one of them our Library, developed from a few half-filled shelves in the Russell Square house; another more difficult to define, the sense of confidence that she inspired when her help was sought on some academic or technical matter, one left feeling that the assessment of the problem was complete. We will not see her like again.

MR. B. R. TOWNEND, O.B.E., writes:

I AM only one of many who has had the privilege of knowing Lilian Lindsay for many years. I have in my files many letters from her which I treasure greatly. She was always helpful, kind and tolerant but she could show a rough edge to her tongue if the occasion demanded. Never shall I forget my shame at receiving a letter from her telling me off like a naughty school boy because I had returned a journal to the Library badly packed. "I never thought *you* would do a thing like that," she wrote. I had not packed the wretched thing myself, but I kept a very careful watch over parcels sent to the library after that well justified reproof.

Whatever the occasion, whether by the written or the spoken word, one always felt uplifted by contact with Lilian Lindsay, and one's life has been greatly enriched by knowing her and being able to count her as a guide, a philosopher and a friend.

One could almost fill an issue of the Journal with stories of Lilian Lindsay. Perhaps I may be permitted to quote from two of her letters in connexion with one of her greatest contributions to dentistry, her translation of Pierre Fauchard's "Le Chirurgien Dentiste."

On April 10, 1946, she wrote to me:

"You are the second to apply for the Fauchard translation and it is exciting to feel that the note in the Journal has aroused some enthusiasm. For many years I wished that someone would translate the whole of the work and took the opportunity of enforced distraction from ordinary routine caused by the air raids, to concentrate on the work. It absorbed all my faculties for the time being which gives me intense satisfaction so when this satisfaction is shared by others it

makes me feel most grateful and I know no one could appreciate the work more than you."

She wrote again on December 12 of the same year:

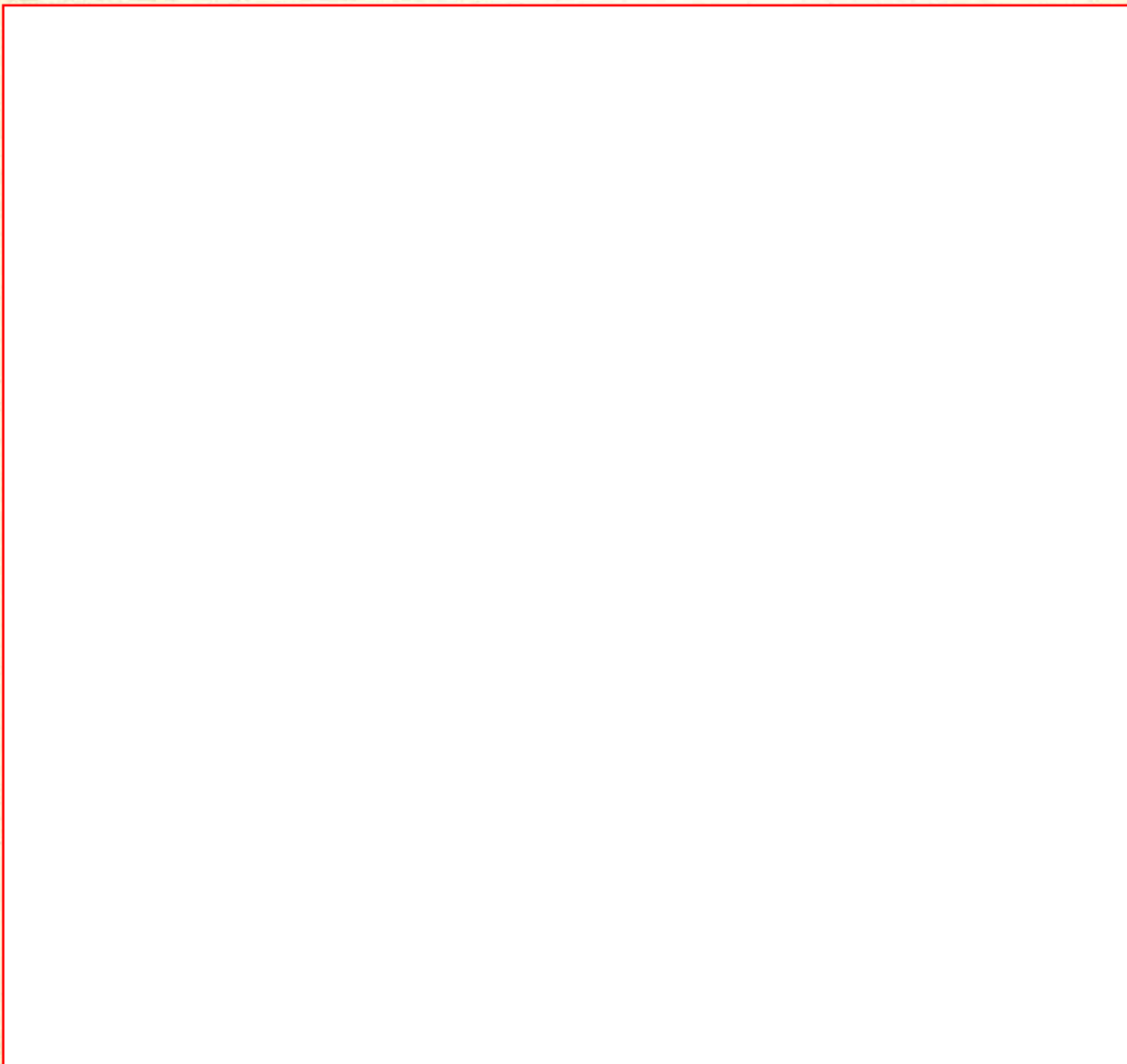
"Your appreciation of the Fauchard is worth all the rest for I know you will understand what the task involved. It may have been the falling bombs that drove me to it—at any rate it helped to pass many an hour of enforced idleness."

A very brave and gracious lady has passed from our scene and the

human race will be hard put to it to produce her like again.

From the Minutes of the meeting of the Editorial Committee of the British Dental Journal held on Friday, February 5, 1960:

"THE members of the Committee wished to record an expression of their deep regret at the death of Dr. Lilian Lindsay, and their appreciation of the services of incalculable value she had rendered to the BRITISH DENTAL JOURNAL over many years."



APPRECIATION

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Mr. BRYAN J. WOOD writes:

MAY I add my tribute to the memory of our beloved Lilian Lindsay. When Robert Lindsay died in 1930 she had already established the Library on a firm foundation and made a place for herself with the Association. Members were turning to her for advice and help in steadily increasing numbers. It was clear to us that it was essential that she should be enabled to carry on the work for which she was so well fitted. She firmly refused to consider what appeared to us to be the obvious solution of accepting even a small honorarium as Librarian and it needed considerable pressure to persuade her to accept the post of sub-editor of the Journal at a nominal salary. Not until nine years later, when I became editor, was I able fully to realise how good a move it had been.

Not only had she an encyclopaedic knowledge of dental literature, this was coupled with an amazingly retentive memory and a compelling passion for accuracy—attributes for which many contributors to the Journal, as well as myself, had reason to be grateful. An indefatigable worker, wielding a fluent pen, to ask her for a "Note" or a short article on almost anything was to be sure of finding the manuscript, written in her clear round hand, albeit with a fine contempt for anything less final than a full stop, on my desk in a matter of hours.

An index of the editorials, notes, abstracts, and short articles, which flowed from her pen would itself make a sizable volume reflecting, as it would, the wide range of her knowledge.

Her work for the Journal was subsidiary. Her main interests lay in the Library and in the field of historical research. No one could rival her in her knowledge of the period prior to the institution of the L.D.S. by the Royal College of Surgeons of England; or indeed, of any other period in the history of the profession.

The calendar in the Jubilee Book of events during the first fifty years of the life of the British Dental Association was almost wholly her work. But to those of us who were privileged to work with her, it was her wide sympathy with those around her and her quiet charm which endeared her to us.

She held strong views on many subjects but was never guilty of intolerance. Modest, almost to a fault, and utterly sincere, her scorn, if that is not too harsh a term to apply to so gentle a creature, was reserved for insincerity and its sister pretentiousness.

Truly a great and lovable woman.

Miss ELEANOR M. KNOWLES,
O.B.E., writes:

TO a large degree the standing of women in any profession must depend on its first representative. Ability, enterprise, and a great heart, without which a new venture cannot be made, are the natural endowments of every true pioneer, but to possess the additional gifts of goodness, graciousness, and gentleness is rare indeed, and it is by these that Dr. Lindsay won the devotion and admiration of everyone who knew her. She worked tirelessly and selflessly in the service of her colleagues and their work, without thought of personal, still less of financial, gain.

Dr. Lindsay and I became friends "by correspondence" at a time when I was using the Library

a good deal. Not only did she send the books and publications I asked for, but many more that she felt would be helpful. She adopted us and thought for us all. When we actually met in 1935 I was, of course, bidden to dine with her. I have a vivid recollection of the occasion, for we had much to discuss and I marvelled at her wonderful gift of bridging the span of years and regarding one as a contemporary.

Dr. Lindsay always knew the answer to every problem. On innumerable occasions I rang up for advice on some academic reference. No time was lost in checking it as all the knowledge required was stored in her accurate and capacious memory and was instantly poured out over the telephone. And what a memory; stimulated, from what she said, by reciting passages from Shakespeare during the small hours when she could not sleep! Who can forget her Presidential Addresses to the British Dental Association and the Odontological and Historical sections of the R.S.M., delivered without note or hesitation and phrased in clear and beautiful English?

Dr. Lindsay once paid herself a modest compliment; she had "learned to copy correctly"! She thought little of her own accomplishments, and I think she sincerely believed her work was of small consequence compared with that of other women dentists.

Her passing is a deep loss and grief to us all, but her load of years was becoming too heavy and, latterly, diminished strength, hearing, and sight added to her difficulties.

To women dentists her legacy is greater and more generous than we can ever know. To the profession she leaves a wonderful library and the blessing of happy memories of her goodness and unflinching kindness.

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MISS WINIFRED M. HUNT writes:

LILIAN LINDSAY held a very special place in the hearts and affections of the women of the profession, and we were indeed proud of her and her achievements. For us she blazed the trail and we owe her a deep debt of gratitude.

Hers was a truly remarkable personality, combining greatness and integrity with an almost child-like humility. A profound knowledge, a wonderful memory, and an eagerness to help others made her a unique figure, and one did in truth wonder "how one small head could carry all she knew."

She is irreplaceable. The privilege of her friendship over many years was highly valued.

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