



Obituary

Dinton

“AUSSIE MOTHER”



THE LATE MISS PENRUDDOCKE
OF DINTON



RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL WORKER

A wide circle, not only in the Salisbury district, but in many parts of the Empire, will hear with deep regret of the death of Miss Constance Penruddocke which occurred on Sunday morning at her home at “Cottrells,” Dinton. She was 80 years of age. A year or two ago she had an illness with rheumatoid arthritis, and although the complaint had continued to afflict her, she stuck to her quiet work for the religious and other bodies in which she was keenly interested; and also she continued to correspond with her large “family” in various parts of the Empire. When Australian troops were encamped at Fovant during the war Miss Penruddocke did much social and religious work among them, and she followed this up by regular correspondence with many of her “boys,” as she called them, up to the time of her death. This piece of work earned for her the affectionate name of “Aussie Mother.” Her final illness lasted only a fortnight and ended peacefully.

AN ANCIENT FAMILY

Miss Constance Henrietta Lowther Penruddocke was the third daughter of the late Mr. Charles Penruddocke, DL., of Compton Park, Compton Chamberlayne, who died in 1899. The Penruddockes are one of the oldest English families, going back well into the Middle Ages. Their forbears lived in Cumberland. This long line of her ancestry gave Miss Penruddocke a keen interest in heraldry and she acquired considerable knowledge of it. For generations the Penruddockes were in possession of Compton Park, which is an ancient estate. The late Mr. Charles Penruddocke, Miss Penruddocke's brother was the last of the line to live there and when the estate passed to other hands Miss Penruddocke felt the wrench. Living at Dinton, just below the old home, she was fond of recalling her girlhood days at the Park. The family also owned at one time Bratton Seymour Estate In Somerset.

LOVED THE COUNTRY

Born and brought up in the heart of the country she was happiest among country folk and none will miss her more than the people in the cottages in and around Dinton, among whom she lived for more than 30 years. She knew all the families in the neighbourhood and was interested in them all. She represented the old aristocracy at its best. Gentle birth and a cultured mind did not lose her the common touch. Her gracious personality will remain a treasured memory for many years. In every way she entered into the life of the people around her. She took a pride in country customs and loved now and again to drop a word in the dialect. A quiet sense of humour and a sympathetic nature made her a welcome guest wherever she went. It was these gifts which made her contact with the Australian soldiers so effective. She spent herself arduously in their welfare and she must have written to and received hundreds of letters since the war from men whose acquaintance she made during the war years. Not only letters, but religious periodicals were regularly posted, and at Christmas time calendars. In her drawing-room was hung a framed letter of thanks from a high officer in the Australian Forces for her work among the Colonial troops.

RELIGIOUS WORK

Her religious work occupied the greater part of her time over many years. Like her father, she was a staunch evangelical member of the Church of England and a firm believer in the tenets of the British-Israel World Federation. She was the founder of the Salisbury branch of the "B.-I.," as she used to call it, and was the Honorary Secretary until fairly recently.

This office entailed a large amount of organising and although she was in the thick of it when she was well over 70, she counted no labour or sacrifice too much, so wholeheartedly did she believe in its principles. She would walk miles in this work and lose no opportunity to discuss it with anyone who showed interest in the movement.

Her own faith always burned brightly, and Christianity was a great reality to her. This was exemplified on one occasion, she was talking with a friend about some carpentry work she had been doing at "Cottrells." A man who had started the work was taken ill, and Miss Penruddocke herself set to and completed it. Astonishment was expressed to her that she was able to undertake such a task with characteristic assurance, she replied. "O, but the Carpenter of Nazareth was there, too."

For many years at Dinton she conducted a Bible Class for young men, and wherever its members went when they left the village she kept in constant touch with them by letters. Formerly also she ran a troop of Boy Scouts. She was the first Secretary of the Dinton Parochial Church Council.

Interested in gardening, she was a supporter of the Dinton, Baverstock and District Horticultural Society. She encouraged sports of various kinds and the football and cricket clubs of the village could always count on her for support.

A correspondent writes:—We regret to announce the death on Saturday, of Miss Constance Henrietta Lowther Penruddocke, at her home, "The Cottrells," Dinton, in her 81st year. Miss Penruddocke was the third daughter of Mr. Charles Penruddocke, DL., of Compton Park, Salisbury, who died in 1899, by his wife, formerly Miss Flora Henrietta Long of Rood Ashton Wiltshire, an aunt of the late Mr. Walter Long, MP. of Rood Ashton, created first Viscount Long of Wraxall, for his long period of Parliamentary service. After the death of her father at Compton Park, Miss Penruddocke went to live in the neighbouring parish of Dinton, where she associated herself with many parochial undertakings, and was keenly interested in the young members of the parish, particularly in their religious education, for whom, until recent years, she always had a well-attended Bible Class, as well as her Boy Scouts, and many juvenile interests. During the Great War, when several divisions of Australian troops were camped in her district, she always made a custom of seeing each draft for overseas off from Dinton Station, giving away innumerable pocket Testaments to the soldiers, who became so attached to her, for her many kind acts towards them, when they were so far away from their own homes, that they always affectionately spoke of her as the "Mother of the Aussies" (Australians.)

After the war she kept up a regular correspondence with all her soldier friends and families, in all parts of the world, and would send several hundred letters and cards at Christmas time, with an unfailing memory that never forgot anyone, By her long life of thought and help for others Miss Penruddocke will be sadly missed by a very wide circle of friends.

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