IN MEMORIAM

DEAN EMERITUS EFFIE JANE TAYLOR
Born April 8, 1874. Died May 20, 1970
Dean Yale School of Nursing 1934-1944
We are here to honor the memory of a grand old lady, Effie Jane Taylor. Born April 8, 1874 in Hamilton, Ontario, she died, in Hamilton, May 20, 1970. Although she ended her days in the community in which she was born, we all know that most of her life was spent elsewhere, and her influence was literally world-wide. Indeed we may say of her what she herself said of Annie Goodrich. Fifteen years ago, at the time of Miss Goodrich's death, Miss Taylor wrote: "The name of Annie W. Goodrich does not belong to America alone. Her name and her achievements are international in scope, wielding an influence upon nursing and nursing education wherever nursing is known." Although these two great women were quite different in temperament, they were friends and colleagues for many years and their professional lives were quite parallel.

Many, if not most, of us here today have our personal recollections of Miss Taylor. I have drawn on my memories and have also been aided by her sister, Marjorie Nelson, who cared for Effie so devotedly for many years, and who let me read some of the many letters she received this spring from Effie's friends and former students. I am so grateful, too, to Calista Salmon for material relating to the I.C.N. And I have drawn on the memory bank of Myrtie Carpenter, Miss Taylor's secretary during her deanship at Yale and her friend, confidante and "ex officio" secretary during her retirement years.

My own memories of Miss Taylor go back almost fifty years, when I was a brand new student in a brand new school of Nursing. Miss Taylor was Superintendent of Nurses in the New Haven Hospital, having come to Yale at the request of Dean Goodrich to help establish an experiment in nursing education. Miss Taylor was eminently dignified, in the Johns Hopkins Hospital uniform of a superintendent -- a simple black dress, full skirt to her shoe-tops, white ruching at the collar. One of her duties was to preside at chapel exercises held every morning at 6:45 in the Gifford chapel of the old New Haven Hospital. That custom, I believe, was discontinued fairly soon. Another, perhaps happier, assignment, which I understand Miss Taylor herself inaugurated, was leading the carol singing early each Christmas morning when a group of us -- nurses and doctors -- went through the wards, carrying lighted candles and singing the familiar songs of the season. Miss Taylor loved to sing, and toward the end of her life she particularly loved the old Scottish songs that she had learned in her childhood.

In my student days, which I am sure is not true today, students were in proper awe of the Superintendent and it was made quite clear to us that any infraction of rules, any mistake in nursing practice, or any misdemeanor meant that we would be "reported to Miss Taylor". As far as I can recall (although it may be retrospective falsification) my wrongdoings were such that could be settled at the supervisory level, and I was not called to the front office as a student. But I well remember an episode when Miss Taylor was of great help to me. By that time I was a new graduate, obviously lacking experience but, as was the custom in those days, put in a position of some responsibility. Faced with nurses who were older than I in years of experience, a situation arose that I could not cope with and I called on Miss Taylor for advice and assistance. She settled the matter calmly. It was only the first of many occasions in which she was of help, but I remember it vividly.

Years later Dean Winternitz of the Yale Medical School, who had been a colleague of Dean Taylor, said to me: "Miss Taylor was a good nurse". (Doubtless he used a colorful adjective as well). Because she was herself a good nurse, and knew what good
nursing meant, she was of course a good superintendent of nurses -- one who was respected by her staff and by her medical colleagues.

When Annie Goodrich retired as Dean of the School of Nursing, her choice as her successor, and the choice of the Administration, was naturally Effie Taylor. From 1934 to 1944 she held this position. It must be remembered that this ten-year span saw first the depression and then World War II, both circumstances which did nothing to make a Dean's lot a happy one. But there is no doubt that her influence on her students was a happy one, and her contacts with them, which extended throughout her life, was a source of gratification to her. May I quote from some of the letters received by her sister.

"Your sister, of course, achieved national and international fame but she always kept that close personal warmth and interest in all of us. Her wise counsel during my student days and later when I turned to her for guidance and encouragement in work I was undertaking will never be forgotten."

"I am one of the many hundreds who have respected, admired and loved her for her deep devotion to the cause of nursing and world health. She has enriched the lives of many, many people by just being the kind of person she was, in her outgoing, helpful interests. And this will stay with us."

"We must feel that she has been blessed with rest and relief from suffering. I shall never cease to marvel at her spirit, grace and fortitude in these last years."

Another great contribution that Miss Taylor made during her Deanship must not be forgotten. In 1937 she was elected president of the International Council of Nurses, at its meeting in London, supposedly for the usual term of four years. But the war came, nurses were too involved in their many responsibilities to hold or attend meetings, and the national associations were separated from each other by curtains of iron, bamboo, mistrust and strife. For ten years Dean Taylor held the ICN together by her strength of will and her indefatigable writing of letters to war-torn countries as well as to those that were neutral. In the July 1959 issue of the International Nursing Review Miss Taylor wrote: "In the early period of the war we had fairly good contacts with all neutral countries, but when the United States entered the conflict our relationships were diminished. When the postal service was almost wholly disrupted we took every opportunity to keep in touch with our members by sending messages through new nurses recruited into the foreign service, the Army Nurse Corps, the Red Cross, the Rockefeller Foundation and other organizations engaged in some form of war duty abroad. Servicemen returning to and from furlough often had the opportunity of telling nurses we were thinking of them...It was a day to remember when someone returned from overseas and brought us personal stories about the nurses and particularly when we learned that some of our messages and letters had been safely delivered and had brought cheer and encouragement to the recipients."

In A History of the International Council of Nurses by Daisy Bridges, a British nurse who was general secretary of the ICN from 1948 to 1961, the author, speaking of Miss Taylor, writes: "It required all her skill, courage, and sense of dedication to the ideals for which the ICN stood to carry the Council through the difficult years ahead."

And again, when ICN headquarters had been moved from London to New Haven and Dean Taylor was carrying on with the help of Calista Banworth as secretary, Miss Bridges wrote: "That the ICN had survived six years of war; that its history was unbroken during this period, and that it had retained its international character and carried on with many of its peacetime activities, is due in a large part to the indomitable courage and determination of the president, Effie Taylor, and the skill and devotion of Calista Banworth (now Mrs. Salmon)."
In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Effie Jane Taylor Memorial Fund established primarily to provide scholarship assistance to international students studying in the Yale University School of Nursing.

Yale School of Nursing
38 South Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06510
The Yale University School of Nursing invites you to attend a Memorial Service for Miss Effie Jane Taylor Dwight Memorial Chapel Yale University Saturday, September 26th at 2:30 p.m. A Reception will follow in the Common Room. A reply is requested.
To: Yale University School of Nursing

___ I plan to attend the NLN Convention in Dallas.

___ Please send detailed information re: Yale Dinner for Alumnae and Friends to be held Monday evening, May 10.

___ I am willing to assist with "manning" the Yale Booth, #70, at the following times: (it must be covered from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)

Sunday ( ), Monday ( ), Tuesday ( )

Name: ___________________________ Class ______

Address: ___________________________ Zip Code ______
Yale University School of Nursing
333 Cedar Street
New Haven, Conn. 06510
Miss Taylor's retirement from the Deanship at Yale and the presidency of ICN did not bring to a close her professional activities nor her letter-writing. She continued to live in New Haven and became very active in the local Red Cross Nursing chapter. She had become an enrolled Red Cross nurse early in her career. She joined the New Haven chapter as Chairman of Nursing Services in 1948 and served in this capacity until 1959, when she was elected Honorary Vice-chairman of the chapter "for her devotion and contribution to Red Cross nursing". In 1959 she also received the Florence Nightingale Medal, highest International Red Cross honor for "distinguished and devoted service to the sick and wounded in time of war and peace and in disaster." Stories are told of Miss Taylor during the disastrous Connecticut floods of 1955, when she visited the Red Cross relief stations, her eyes and mind alert to the needs for special equipment and supplies. Remember that she was over eighty at this time! It is said that she reminded some of the nurses of Queen Victoria and we like to think that she would have felt complimented. She had a great love for things British and liked to hear about Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, when the workmen on the streets hailed her with "Old Girl, you've done it well”. Surely we can say the same of Effie Taylor.

And her correspondence continued. What a delight she took in her Christmas cards, both the sending and receiving. When she was well past ninety she was sending over two hundred cards and she could not bear to have a single name deleted from her list. Each one brought up happy memories. She delighted to pause and review her connection with the individual, remembering the most minute details of their relationship.

All her life she was fond of children and children warmly returned her affection. A granddaughter of one of Miss Taylor's earliest students is here today because she remembers, with love, her early childhood visits with Miss Taylor. I think Effie would be pleased by this!

Miss Taylor's last public appearance at Yale was in 1965, when she spoke at a luncheon of the School of Nursing alumnae. She had passed her ninety-first birthday, but her voice was strong, her words sincere, her sentiments dedicated, as always. Perhaps the alumnae remember best her quoting from the old Gaelic blessing that she loved.

In the letter I received from her sister Marjorie describing the last few months of Effie's life she wrote: "The past six months or more she developed the most angelic smile. I am sure her angels were not far away." We are glad for Effie that her long years of work and waiting are over. We know she is at peace. We bid her farewell with words from the same Gaelic blessing that she quoted:

"May God hold her in the hollow of His hand."

Elizabeth Bixler Torrey
Dean Emeritus, Yale School of Nursing