

7. Edith Cavell remembered – selected quotes from 1915-19

Rev Philip Stocks, Anglican chaplain Brussels was Edith Cavell's vicar in Brussels from 1907-14. He had met her mother when she spent time in Brussels with Edith to see if living there might work. He wrote from Canada to her 79 year old mother in Norwich on October 16 1915: Edith was *'one of the kindest and gentlest women I have ever known'... 'never in a hurry, always ready to do a right action – a quiet, modest, God-fearing woman'*

The Princesse de Croy who was a key player in the underground network and was tried with Edith Cavell recalled her first encounter:

She receives me coldly at first, very reserved and sure of herself. She is tall and slight, wears her blue nurse's dress, her grey hair gathered under the white cap; her big eyes show sympathy and intelligence.

Of a later meeting she wrote: *"Nurse Cavell was slight, but very straight, with large earnest grey eyes which seemed to see through one, and a quiet dignified manner which commanded respect".*

An unnamed colleague from her days at Shoreditch infirmary (where Edith Cavell worked as assistant matron in 1903-6) told a reporter when news broke of her execution:

'When the news, reached us today there was not a dry eye among those who knew her. Many a shabbily dressed caller today asked 'Is it true?' remembering the many kindnesses she had done for them or their children... A splendid teacher, a very capable organizer, and a zealous worker. She brought to her work an extremely acute intelligence'...

Lance Corporal Arthur Wood, one of six Cheshire Regiment men 'saved' by Edith Cavell wrote to her mother on October 18 1915: *'She was the best friend I ever had'*.

Sister Elisabeth Wilkins, Edith's deputy in Brussels, wrote of her *'a frail delicate-appearing little woman. Her hair was greying and she looked more than her 45 years owing to years of dedicated hard work.*

Edith Cavell: *'Don't think of me as a martyr or a heroine... simply as a nurse who tried to do her duty'.*

Photo from open access copy of De Croy memoirs on web:

<https://archive.org/details/warmemories00croyuoft>

