

## #SundayWiMIN23 Week 46: Dr Marie E. Hayes (1874-1908)

Dr Marie E. Hayes was a medical missionary and chief of Rewari Hospital in India, part of the Cambridge Mission to Delhi. Known for her work, passion, and character, a ward was built in her name in St Stephen's Hospital, Delhi.

Marie Elizabeth Hayes was born on May 17, 1874, at the Glebe House, Raheny, Dublin. She was the oldest daughter of Canon F.C. Hayes and his wife, Annabella Wilson. Marie's father was the rector of Raheny Parish from 1873 and her mother founded the Mothers' Union in Ireland to promote the well-being of families.

Hayes started working towards her medical degree in 1897 at Alexandra College in Dublin, Ireland. She continued her education at Catholic University School of Medicine, which was her only option in seeking a medical degree because women were excluded from attending the protestant Trinity College Dublin. At Catholic University she achieved "high status" with a silver medal in surgery, pathology, and obstetrics, one of few female students to achieve this status. She completed a residency at Dublin's Coombe Hospital. She was then invited to return to the Coombe as a clerk, and later still received a 6-month residency in Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Dublin, one of the few hospitals that accepted female residents. She was one of only five female candidates to pass the final degree examination in May, 1904 and was the only female student to obtain an "Upper Pass". After obtaining her MB, BCh and BAO degrees, in preparation for missionary service in India, she returned to school at the London School of Tropical Medicine for 3 months, completed a temporary residency in the S.P.G. missionary hostel in Wandsworth, and studied Urdu. After finishing her studies, Dr Hayes worked as a locum in the Belfast Infirmary for a few months.

Hayes's missionary call was attributed to the role her father's and mother's religious service played in her life. Her mother reported that Marie first expressed interest in missionary work in 1887, at 13 years old, and never lost her compulsion for service. Her motive in obtaining her medical degree was that so she could become a medical missionary.

In 1905, Dr Hayes started her journey to her first mission post at Cambridge Mission to Delhi, India. She was accepted into the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S.P.G.) in January of that year. From the time Hayes arrived in Punjab, India, her workload was intense due to understaffing in the hospital.

The mission was composed of 3 major hospitals. The first and largest hospital of the mission, St Stephen's Hospital in Delhi, was opened in 1885; it was the first mission hospital for women and children in Delhi. Dr Hayes worked under Dr Jenny Muller, who was the first full-time doctor at this hospital. Dr Hayes spent 26 months in India working for the Mission before an early death, and her short period of service was described as "impactful".

Dr. Hayes died at the age of 33. She had contracted pneumonia at Christmas in 1907 and this led to death on Saturday January 3, 1908. Her funeral service was held at St. Stephen's Church in Delhi. When word of her death got to her home in Ireland, a memorial service was held at All Saints' Church, Raheny, on January 6, 1908.

Dr Hayes was known for a significant impact on the mission and for paving the way for many women who wished to pursue medical degrees and residencies. After her death, a memorial fund was established in her name in Dublin. This fund was used to finance the construction of a ward in the new St Stephen's Hospital in Delhi, named "The Marie Hayes Ward". She is additionally recognized in the hospital chapel with a memorial brass name plate and separately a prayer desk inscribed with the words (in Urdu): "For the service of God in prayer and in memory of Dr Marie Hayes and what work she did. Placed here by nurses of Delhi, Karnal and Rewari. Year of Jesus, 1908."

After Marie's death, her mother decided to compile and publish all the letters that Hayes had sent home during her work on the Cambridge Mission to Delhi. Published as "At Work: Letters of Marie Elizabeth Hayes", her mother hoped these letters would inspire others to continue her daughter's work.

In her home village of Raheny, a memorial Celtic cross was built. The engraved cross currently stands beside St. Assam's Church and graveyard in the centre of the village.

{Taken from Wikipedia, November 2023:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie\\_Elizabeth\\_Hayes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie_Elizabeth_Hayes)}