

National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

THE THREE DAYS COURSE held from June 2nd to 4th for secretaries and treasurers of associations affiliated to The National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was a happy innovation, if we might judge from the keen interest and apparent appreciation of members who attended.

The course opened in the Cavell Home of the London Hospital, when the assembly was welcomed by Miss Duff Grant, R.R.C., President of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Miss Ceris Jones, Matron, who in a few words wished also to express her personal and very kind welcome, on this interesting occasion, "the first of its kind to be held."

The Opening Address.

Lady Mann, O.B.E., S.R.N., former matron of the London Hospital and a Vice-President of the National Council of Nurses and President of the London Hospital League of Nurses in her opening address explained the foundation of the National Council which the marvellous pioneer work of its founder—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick—of whom she stood in awe—had brought into being in 1904. In speaking of nursing history, Lady Mann referred to the fact that the Governors and the Matron of that hospital, Miss Lückes, strongly opposed the movement of State Registration of Nurses. With infinite pains, pointing out that in its affiliation to the International Council of Nurses, the National Council formed the link with the countries of the world. Of the activities of the Council she thought that of giving opportunities to nurses to work abroad was especially valuable. In her full and very explanatory address in which she touched on many aspects, Lady Mann thought comparatively few take the lead—and urged secretaries and treasurers to arouse the interest of the younger people in the importance of the work and to encourage suggestions rather than to automatically say "no"—to welcome new ideas and let the young people carry them out. Hearty applause and a warm vote of thanks were accorded Lady Mann for her most informative address. Questions were invited and the meeting ended after intelligent discussion. Prior to the departure by coach, for a visit to Blenheim Palace, and by the kind invitation of the Matron, the company proceeded to the board room where a delectable luncheon was greatly appreciated.

And then to Blenheim Palace.

How pleasant the journey as the coaches sped through town and much of our English country-side, which brought our party through Woodstock and finally through the entrance gates, then to see so suddenly on every hand the unrivalled beauty of Blenheim. Of this, Lady Randolph Churchill (mother of Mr. Winston Churchill), wrote on her first visit to Blenheim: "As we passed through the entrance archway and the lovely scenery burst upon me, Randolph said with pardonable pride, 'This is the finest view in England.' Looking at the lake, the bridge, the miles of magnificent park studded with old oaks . . . and the huge and stately palace, I confess I felt awed. But my American pride forbade the admission."

On our arrival at the Palace—the party was most kindly received by Her Grace The Duchess of Marlborough, J.P. The wonderful welcome extended by the Duchess to this representative body of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and then the spontaneous consent of Her Grace to inclusion in a photographic snap, taken by Miss Jeffries (assistant secretary) won the heartfelt gratitude and admiration of all!

Then began a memorable tour of Blenheim! How arresting the grandeur of the view! Stretching for miles the richly wooded Great Park, where at its peak stands the



The Duchess of Marlborough with some of her guests.

Column of Victory and Marlborough's statue rises nobly above the trees. The Great Lake, with its lovely Island, of which history relates that in 1764, Launcelet (capability) Brown by his ingenuity—gave Blenheim the most magnificent private lake in Europe. Another glory of the scene is Vanburgh's Grand Bridge with hanging beeches beyond! We learn—it is the view that Turner painted: the same that caused George III to exclaim, "We have nothing to equal this!"

The Palace was designed and built in a heavy Italo-Corinthian style by Sir J. Vanburgh between the years of 1705-1722, and was the gift of Queen Anne to John, Duke of Marlborough and his Duchess—Sarah—in recognition of his military service and especially of his decisive victory at Blenheim.

Passing through the imposing entrance to the Great Hall, attention is drawn to the massive door—some 150 years old and weighing four tons! A rare door indeed—there being no key-hole outside and therefore the door can only be opened from within!

The balcony, the fine portraits, statues and flags, (replicas of the first Duke's campaigns) all blend harmoniously with the perfect proportions of the Great Hall.

Mr. Churchill's Birth Place.

Leading directly from the Great Hall, a room is entered—which was originally one of the suite of apartments allotted to Marlborough's domestic Chaplain. Here on November 30th, 1874, Mr. Winston Churchill was born.

Among the relics, one of great interest concerning the career of Mr. Churchill—is the framed original reward offered for the capture of Winston Churchill alive or dead "when he was taken prisoner by the Boers, during his service in the South African War (1899-1902) but escaped." Two paintings—Mr. Churchill's work—one of "The Great Lake" are hung here.

Here the Blenheim Guide tells us of Mr. Churchill:—"He has recently declared, I took two very important decisions; to be born and to marry (for he proposed in the grounds). I am happily content, he added, with the decisions I took on both those occasions."

The tour of the splendid apartments: The State Rooms, the Grand Cabinet, the Saloon, the Long Library, the Dining room—one can only touch on the fringe of the wonders of a palace of which the buildings and courts cover seven acres! Its furnishings, portraits by the great masters, priceless carpets, dazzling chandeliers, magnificent tapestries and cabinets of rare china, of which there is no counterpart in the world, have to be seen to be believed!

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