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EDITORIAL.

THE CAPITAL OF THE MIDLANDS.

The forthcoming visit of members of the National Council of Trained Nurses to Birmingham gives them an opportunity of learning something of the great capital of the Midlands, with its many activities, professional, social, and industrial.

Many people have no idea of the interests and attractions centred in this progressive city, and dismiss it with the remark: "Isn't it somewhere in the Black Country?" conjuring up visions of unlovely chimneys and an atmosphere of grime.

The facts are far otherwise. Bordering on the Black Country—which it may be remarked in passing has a special interest of its own—Birmingham is a city of broad streets, fine buildings, and bracing atmosphere. As the cathedral city it is the centre of the religious life of the National Church in the diocese, its Roman Cathedral is famous for Cardinal Newman's long connection with it, and among leading Non-conformists it is proud to claim John Angell James, and R. W. Dale.

The city, with its fine university, is also a seat of learning, and its progressive character is stamped on its educational methods.

The King Edward's Grammar School in New Street has educated many pupils who have afterwards made their mark in the world including Dr. Benson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Westcott of Durham, Sir E. Burne Jones, Colonel Kekewich of Kimberley fame, and many others. The advantages of this ancient foundation are now extended to girls.

The citizens are as a rule lovers of music, and several famous oratorios have first been heard at the triennial musical festival at the Town Hall, a handsome building designed

on the model of a Greek temple, which possesses a magnificent organ.

A newer building is the Council House, finely placed in Victoria Square, where the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress will entertain the members of the Conference at an afternoon reception on June 10th.

Leading citizens have taken a pride in enriching the Art Gallery with noble gifts, and it contains a number of fine pictures, as well as statuary and bronzes.

Within easy reach of the centre of the city is Aston Hall, a stately mansion dating back to 1618 finely placed on a slope and surrounded by its own demesne. It was thrown open to the public in 1858 when Queen Victoria opened it as the "People's Park."

Birmingham although marred by slums, probably worse than any that London can show, is exceptionally fortunate in its public parks and open spaces, many of them extremely beautiful. Indeed, on all sides, except where it has been defaced by man in his search for wealth, the surrounding country is lovely.

Birmingham is probably best known for its industries, and the products of its factories are to be found in all parts of the world.

One of the most important of its industries is the gun trade, which affords employment to numbers of skilled workpeople. The brass bedstead trade, button making, and the glass trade are important and flourishing businesses, and the city will always be associated with the name of Elkington and the manufacture of electro plate. Gillott's pens, and Nettleford's screws are also known throughout the world.

The citizens are virile, energetic, purposeful, dominating, the strength of their iron seems to have entered into their composition. Where they give their trust, and it is not given lightly, they are warm hearted, loyal, and true as their own steel.

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