

## FULHAM PALACE.

### THE FREEMASONS' WAR HOSPITAL, No. 3.

Many and varied have been the phases through which Fulham Palace has passed. For many centuries it has been the summer residence of the Bishops of London; Henry III often stayed there; and not less interesting royal visitors have been Queen Elizabeth, and Charles I and his consort, Henrietta Maria, who dined there with Bishop Montaigne; but never has it been put to a more beneficent or Christian use than that to which Dr. Winnington Ingram, the present holder of the See, has devoted it, in handing it over to the British Red Cross Society as a military hospital, which will be administered by the Committee of the Freemasons' War Hospital, in the Fulham Road.

It would be hard to find a more complete contrast to the dreary mediocrity of the Fulham Road and the busy thoroughfare of its extension—the Fulham Palace Road—along which buses and trams run continuously, than the desmene of the Bishops of London, surrounded by a moat a mile in circumference, which is supposed to have been made by the Danish army encamped there in the winter of 880.

As one turned into Bishop's Avenue last Saturday afternoon, the holders of the allotments in the West Meadow were diligently at work, and hundreds of men and women must have been taking advantage of the lovely spring afternoon to do their bit of war work in the cultivation of the soil.

Passing over the stone bridge and through massive wooden gates, secured from the inside by a primitive bar, one entered the quadrangle, which is the oldest part of the present Palace and was built by Bishop Fitzjames in the reign of Henry VII. Facing the gate is the principal entrance-porch, over which Bishop Bonner had his oratory. The mellow red-brick buildings, with their steep-pitched, gabled roof, the central fountain and the dove-cote on the left, form an idyll so peaceful, so remote from the crash and clamour of war, that one needs the reminder over the arch of the corridor as one enters the Palace, of the one word, "Fortitude"—a word often emphasised by the Bishop in sermons and addresses, since that memorable Sunday evening in August, 1914, when, from the pulpit of St. Paul's Cathedral he bade the soldiers of the Empire "Forth, and God defend the Right."

The drawing-room and dining-room, communicating with one another, opening by French windows on to the terrace, have been converted into two large wards, and look out—as do those on the floor above—over a scene of sylvan beauty. When Bishop Compton was suspended by James II from executing the duties of his high office, he had leisure to devote himself to his favourite hobby of gardening. No mean botanist, he collected and planted oaks, acacias, magnolias and other beautiful trees and shrubs. As a view typically English, that from the windows

of Fulham Palace across the grounds to Fulham Parish Church—the Gothic tower of which, built in 1440, forms a notable feature in the landscape—can hardly be surpassed. It is a scene upon which the convalescent patients, about 100 in number, who are to be received at this latest war hospital, will look daily from the pleasant wards, flooded with sunshine, and equipped with every device for their good nursing and comfort. The nursing arrangements are under the able superintendence of Mrs. Fox-Symons, who, as Miss Calverley, was a Sister at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and saw active service in the South African War—"a nice lady—a very nice lady"—is the verdict of the custodian, a member of the British Red Cross Society. The Bishop's study is devoted to her special use.

To the student of history Fulham Palace is full of interest. With it is associated the name of Bishop Fitzjames, who built the beautiful Hall, which is now to be used by the patients as their dining hall. It is a wainscoted room which must formerly have had a minstrels' gallery. In the windows, in coloured glass, are the coats of arms of various bishops, and an inscription over the mantelpiece records that, with the adjoining quadrangle, it was erected by Bishop Fitzjames on the site of the former Palace, as ancient as the Conquest. Portraits of Henry VII, Henry VIII, and other English sovereigns are hung on the walls. It was used both by Bishop Ridley—later burnt at the stake at Oxford—and Bishop Bonner, who was wont to examine heretics there, in one instance at least the examination taking the form of burning the hand of the unfortunate victim. The saintly Laud, Juxon, who attended Charles I on the scaffold, Bishop Porteous, who formed the library in the Palace which bears his name, and, more recently, Bishop Blomfield (who planted the great cedar which now adorns the lawn), are also amongst the notable Bishops who have used this historic Hall.

The older portion of the Palace, on the north side of the great Quadrangle—where the rooms are smaller and not so bright as those used as wards—are reserved for the quarters of the staff. Bishop Bonner's bedroom has been wisely allotted to a night nurse, for it would be somewhat eerie to wake in the dark in the quarters inhabited by that bigoted and bloodthirsty prelate even after the lapse of over 300 years. Rumour has it, moreover, that he still frequents the room at night, and indeed it is easy to believe that the crimes he authorised in the name of the God of Love still weigh him to earth. If so it be, perhaps—who knows?—the occupation of his room by one whose life is devoted to the ministry of healing may help to heal the remorse which the clearer vision of the life beyond must have awakened, and bring peace to his troubled soul.

In a corridor in the Palace are to be seen the words, "Keep your face to the light, and you will always have the shadows behind you." May this be true of all who progress to recovery under its hospitable and historic roof.

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