

OPENING OF HEADQUARTERS OF THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

The General Nursing Council for England and Wales, to provide for the statutory registration of nurses, has been working hard for a year, and by the courtesy of the Ministry of Health has been afforded space for its initial labours at Whitehall—a courtesy which should be gratefully acknowledged by the nursing profession. Now, however, that the Register is about to be opened, it is necessary that the Council should occupy its own Headquarters with sufficient office room to enable the great work to be done in the best possible manner. No. 12, York Gate, Regent's Park, has been acquired for this purpose, and after re-decoration and furnishing was opened on Thursday, June 10th, by her Royal Highness Princess Christian, a red-letter day indeed for British nurses.

From early morning—and, indeed, for days before—the Furnishing Committee, the officials, and the clerical and domestic staffs had been hard at work preparing the Council's House for the great occasion, and without further preamble, let me say, with the greatest success in the world. From the doorstep to the cunning little flat at the top of the house everything, the whole scheme of decoration and furnishing, and the colour schemes of the flowers, struck me as most charming, and I heard nothing but praise of the harmonious simplicity and artistic utility of the arrangements, expressed by all manner of guests.

The guests were welcomed by Mr. J. C. Priestley, K.C., Chairman of the Council, supported by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Chairman of the Registration Committee; Miss Alicia Lloyd Still, Chairman of the Education and Examination Committee, together with members of the Council.

The Opening Ceremony.

Her Royal Highness, Princess Christian, arrived at 3.30, attended by Miss du Cane, and graciously accepted a bouquet of Madame Chatenay roses tied with pale blue ribbon, from Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. She was then escorted by the Chairman to the Committee Room (one of the fine drawing rooms on the first floor), where many of the guests were assembled to take part in the Opening Ceremony. In this room the national colours predominated, from the dull blue walls, crimson Turkey carpet, and white woodwork; and in the floral decorations of coral red fuschias in gilded baskets and crimson and white carnations and bright blue cornflowers.

It was specially appropriate that the ceremony should be performed by Princess Christian, who gave to the Registration movement the great assistance of her support when it was first inaugurated 33 years ago, and there were present in the room some who remembered how, as President of the British Nurses' Association, Her Royal Highness attended and spoke at the

public meeting in St. George's Hall in 1888, at which the Association—later to be granted the prefix Royal by Queen Victoria—was formally launched, at which one of its avowed objects was declared to be the State Registration of Nurses.

The Chairman's Address.

Mr. Priestley addressed Her Royal Highness as follows:—

In asking your Royal Highness to come here to-day to open the official home of the Register of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales we bore in mind the great interest you have always taken in the arduous work which culminated in the Nurses' Registration Act of 1919.

Your acceptance of our invitation was an act of grace which filled us with pleasure, and inspires us to hope that we shall go forward on our journey with courage to assured success, conscious that we do so with your wishes of Godspeed.

You see around you not only the present members of the Council, but many who have fought the battle for registration from its earliest days, and borne the heat and burden of a prolonged engagement, sometimes rebuffed, but never discouraged, always persevering towards the goal they had set out to win.

So long ago as 1887 the seed was sown by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick and her friends. She became the leader of the movement she now sees nearing accomplishment. Aided as she was by her husband, who spared neither time nor money in the cause, the movement grew in volume until my late friend, Dr. Farquharson, introduced the first Bill into Parliament in 1904, which was followed by that taken charge of by Lord Novar in 1905.

At a moment like this, when one sees the work of many earnest workers brought to fruition—of so many, indeed, that to recall their names would take hours—the mind naturally turns to those who took great part in the struggle, but who, alas! have passed away. In particular, I would refer to Miss Isla Stewart, Miss Louisa Stevenson, Mrs. Kildare Treacy, Sir Victor Horsley, and lastly, that great public servant, Sir Robert Morant. How they would have loved to be with us to-day! Who knows? Perhaps they are.

It would not be fitting to pass over in silence the great assistance rendered to registration by the great societies. Amongst them:—

The British Medical Association,
The Royal British Nurses' Association,
The Matrons' Council of Great Britain
and Ireland,

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