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## EDITORIAL.

### THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

#### A MUNIFICENT BENEFACTION.

We are privileged to make an announcement to-day, which will be of the greatest importance and interest to the whole Nursing Profession. Under the above title, an Institution has been formed and has been endowed by a wealthy benefactor, who desires to remain anonymous, with a Donation of more than £100,000. And it is most probable that, if Nurses prove themselves able and willing to justify this far-sighted and most valuable benevolence, further large Donations will be given to the College. This munificent gift, it may be added, provides an immediate income of more than £5,000 per annum.

In order to explain the matter, it is necessary for us to call attention to the fact that the history and experience of all other recognised professions has proved that a State Examination, such as that now instituted by Parliament for the Registration of Nurses, must inevitably tend to become, and to remain, a test only of minimum efficiency—to recognise the intelligence and knowledge of the least educated, as well as of the best educated, type of nurse. The natural result has, therefore, been that, in every profession, higher tests than the minimum have sooner or later been sought for, and gained, so as to enable the higher classes of workers in each calling to be distinguished from those who have merely attained to the lowest qualification.

It was with this anticipation in mind, that in 1901, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, in a paper presented on Trained Nurses' Day at the Buffalo Exposition, U.S.A., entitled "A Plea for the Higher Education of Nurses," suggested the formation of Colleges of Nursing in the following words:—

"Is it too much to hope," she said, "that the wealthy will come forward and found Colleges of Nursing? Colleges in which the teaching power of the profession would be focussed and centred, which would put the apex on our training course, and, by improving the standard of nursing the sick, confer a real and lasting benefit on humanity at large."

It should be clearly understood that, not only will the new Institution afford the most intelligent nurses the means of obtaining the higher qualifications which in due course will doubtless become essential for those desirous of gaining the higher posts in their profession, it will also tend to introduce into the Nursing Profession the most refined and best educated women, to whom it has hitherto offered little inducement, except

of course, the great prospect of self-sacrifice for the sake of others. And whilst this latter inducement will always be an attraction to ardent and altruistic women, it is equally certain that more substantial personal benefits, and a higher professional status, will attract a greater number of candidates of a very desirable type to adopt Nursing as their profession in the future.

The great objects which the British College of Nurses will set itself, therefore, to attain, may be briefly described as the elevation of the Nursing Profession, for the benefit of all classes in the community; and, secondly, the better protection and assistance of its own individual nurse members.

The College will be formed on the lines which have proved so successful and valuable in the ancient existing Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and it will be composed of Fellows and Members *who will be women nurses only*. To commence with, there will be a "Period of Grace," as is customary in the formation of all such bodies; and during that period Registered Nurses who have held, or are holding, responsible official positions in the Nursing World will be eligible for appointment, *without Examination or Entrance Fee*, as the Foundation FELLOWS of the College. Registered Nurses who have been trained for at least three years in recognised British Hospitals, will, in like manner, be eligible for appointment as Foundation MEMBERS of the College. The Foundation Fellows will pay an annual subscription of Two Guineas per annum. The Foundation Members will pay an annual subscription of One Guinea. After the "Period of Grace" the Diplomas of Fellow or Member will only be obtainable by passing separate examinations and the payment of Entrance Fees and possibly larger Life or Annual Subscriptions. *So it would be wise for all who desire to be recognised, in future, as of the highest status in their profession and to enjoy the valuable advantages of connection with the College, to make early application for a Fellowship or Membership, because we understand that the Trustees reserve the right to terminate the Period of Grace at any time.*

The College will be governed by a President, two Vice-Presidents, two Trustees, of whom one will be the Treasurer, and a Council of Twelve Registered Nurses, of whom eight will be Fellows and Four will be Members of the College. Each Member of Council will receive an Honorarium of £100 per annum, whilst the President, and Vice-Presidents will be further remunerated.

The Officers and first Council, will be nominated by the Trustees, and, after a defined term of office, the twelve members of the Council will be elected, the eight Fellows by the Fellows of the College, and the four Members by the Members of the College, to represent their particular

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