

## PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS TO FOUNDATION FELLOWS AND FOUNDATION MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

Long before the hour appointed for the Presentation of Diplomas to the Foundation Fellows and Foundation Members of the British College of Nurses on April 29th, the Hoare Memorial Hall at the Church House, Westminster, was filled by an expectant throng, marshalled into their numbered seats with ease and expedition, owing to the previous organisation—by the President and the Secretary—and the valuable clerical help given by Miss A. M. Bushby, Councillor and Miss Elsie Armstrong and Miss Latham, Miss Haswell and Miss Clara Thurstan Miss G. R. Hale, R.R.C., Secretary of the College, and the twelve Stewards, were readily distinguishable by their rosettes of petunia coloured satin ribbon (the College colour).

It was an historic moment long to be remembered. Punctually at 2.30 the procession of Councillors entered the Hall in their robes of office, headed by Miss E. J. Haswell, representing the Members, the Fellows following, walking two abreast; then the two Vice-Presidents, and lastly the President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick.

Round after round of applause greeted them from the assembled Fellows and Members, who rose to their feet as they filed in and took their allotted seats, six on the platform itself, on either side of the President, and the remainder at its base, facing the audience, on the President's right hand were Canon Donaldson and Mrs. Strong, on her left Dr. Bedford Fenwick and Sir Richard Barnett, M.P., while the seats on either side were occupied by distinguished guests.

The scene from the Hall was one to be remembered, full of colour and charm. The Councillors in their beautiful and symbolic robes of black satin with petunia satin facings—that of the President being enriched with gold lace—and black velvet hats. Vases filled with lovely pink and mauve tulips, backed the platform, the gift of Miss Haswell. On the table were two piles of Diplomas ready to be presented; and as a floor covering, a Persian rug of rare beauty, kindly lent by Messrs. Harvey Nicholls and Co., of Knightsbridge.

Miss Beatrice Treasure, F.B.C.N., presented the President on behalf of the Council, with a lovely posy of flowers tied with golden streamers of tissue ribbon.

The Nursing Profession had come into its own, and appeared before the public with the dignity and circumstance due to its importance in the body politic—thrilled, appreciative, and responsive, those present realised the significance of their Council, and hailed the dawn of the new era in Nursing.

The proceedings opened with Prayers, read by the Rev. F. Lewis Donaldson, M.A., Canon of Westminster, and had specially in remembrance those with whom trained nurses are brought in contact in their work, those who bear the pains of sickness, the aged, and the dying, Canon Donaldson prayed for wisdom and skill, sympathy and patience for their physicians, surgeons, and nurses, and praised God for Health, bringing wholesomeness of body and mind; for Mirth, quickening the blood, uniting us with others and refreshing us for work;

and for Joy, that heightens all our life and doubles our powers, petitions leading on naturally to the desire for "a safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at the last."

The President then called upon Dr. Bedford Fenwick, Trustee and Treasurer of the College, for his Opening Remarks. Dr. Fenwick, who on rising was greeted with long continued applause, spoke as follows:—

### SPEECH BY DR. BEDFORD FENWICK, TRUSTEE AND TREASURER.

It is an old and established custom amongst persons who, like myself, are unaccustomed to public speaking, to commence their speech by telling a story, in order to hang thereon the further remarks which they desire to make. So, as the day is young and we have plenty of time, I will ask you to go back with me to the year 1300 Anno Domini. At that time, we find from old records, that there existed in the City of London, amongst the many City Companies, a Guild or Company of Barbers. Whether it was because in those days the men wore their hair long, while the women certainly wore their hair longer than is customary to-day, it is evident that the Barbers had plenty of spare time on their hands, because we find that beyond attending to hair and wigs, they carried out the practice of drawing teeth, and of the then fashionable custom of blood-letting. Whether or no they carried out the latter duties successfully and to the public advantage, we find that, some seventy years later, there had come into existence in the same City of London, a Guild or Company of Surgeons, who presumably imagined that they could carry out surgical operations with greater skill and efficiency than the Barbers. Anyhow, it requires no knowledge of human nature to understand that there appears to have been constant friction and trouble between the Barbers and the Surgeons; that they worked against each other, and that there were constant and serious disputes between them which had to be referred in each case to their controlling body, the Mayor and Corporation of the City of London, under whose authority they both were compelled to act. And so acute and frequent became this friction and dispute, that after about 130 years, that is to say, in the year 1500, these two bodies amalgamated together and still, as City Companies, so continued to work. Unfortunately, however, this seems to have brought no harmony. But in those days things moved slowly; and although we find that the friction and disputes between the Barbers and the Surgeons continued and persisted, they actually continued to work together until the year 1745, when they finally parted company, and again became separate Guilds. The Surgeons by that time had made some progress, and had certainly improved both the knowledge and the practice of Surgery, so that they felt strong enough in 1800, first of all to try to obtain an Act of Parliament, and when this failed in consequence of serious opposition, they succeeded in obtaining a Royal Charter, giving them the title of the Royal College of Surgeons in London, and making them a self-governing body, absolutely independent of the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London. Then the Surgeons quickly advanced. In 1822 they obtained another Royal Charter changing their officials from the old City titles of a Master and Wardens, to a President and Vice-Presidents, and their old-world Court of Assistants was to be termed a Council. Then, progress became even more rapid, both in the education and the prestige of the Surgeons, and in the great improvement of Surgery. And, in 1843, another Charter was granted to them as the Royal College of Surgeons of England, which was in future to be composed of Fellows and Members.

Now for the moral of my story, and I want most earnestly to impress it upon you. All the great advances in Surgery;

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