

**MISS COATES,
Sister-in-Charge, R.B.N.A. Settlement Home.**

A few months' experience has served to endorse the opinion, expressed by the ladies at the Settlement Home some time ago, that no more suitable person could be found to undertake the duties of Sister-in-Charge than Miss Mary Coates. Not that there was much doubt on this point in the minds of those Members of the Executive Committee to whom Miss Coates is known personally; but, when it was first suggested that she should become the Sister-in-Charge of the Home, Miss Coates declined to accept office, on the ground that she felt that her working years were over, and that she would prefer to enjoy the rest and freedom which they had earned. The ladies at the Home had other views for her however; they are people who always know what they want, and they have a way of managing to get it, too. Here fell a word of Miss Coates' popularity in the Home, in which she had taken up residence, there fell another about her kindness to a little blind and delicate lady in the Home, of her visits to another gone into hospital, and her goodness to this one and that suffering from, perhaps, the prevailing "flu" or some other ill that flesh is heir to. We heard about her common-sense, her lack of "fussiness," and, in private interviews, opinions were expressed that, if Miss Coates could only be persuaded to reconsider her decision, this would meet the wishes of all, and the Settlement might call itself Utopia from that day. And so it happened that Miss Coates found that the Royal British Nurses' Association had need of her still, and with light-hearted, characteristic humour she accepted office, saying that, if the Settlement Nurses lived to regret their interference in the Committee's affairs, they could lay the blame on their own heads.

Miss Coates was trained at Chelsea Infirmary, and joined the Association in 1893. She had a varied career, but, probably, the work she most enjoyed was that which she undertook, when she became Matron of the Infirmary and Isolation Hospital of the Royal Naval Schools at Eltham. She held this appointment for eight years, in fact, until the Schools closed owing to certain new regulations of the Admiralty. Miss Coates has many a humorous story to tell of her experiences among the boys; her reminiscences of their pranks and youthful candour make good hearing. But there is a somewhat startling, if quaint, psychology in her assertion that she got the best experience, for her present post, while in the Naval Schools at Eltham; it serves, at any rate, to indicate her point of view towards her colleagues in the Home. They are not "laid on the shelf," as, sometimes, they jestingly tell us. They are alert, buoyant, interested, and so Miss Coates, in dealing with them, falls back, not upon her experience of the nursing of chronic cases, of whom she has had not a few, but upon that experience and that outlook on life which she gained from a crowd of merry school boys. Some of the masters and boys write to her still, but, as she somewhat pathetically remarks, "so many of the lads went West in the War." She still

wears the beautiful watch and chain which they and their masters and monitors gave to her, when the Schools closed down. After this Miss Coates took private cases from the R.B.N.A., and, incidentally, we can well remember the remark of our predecessor when Miss Coates called just after our appointment to the Secretaryship: "A square peg in a square hole that one, no matter what case she goes to." And so it has proved at the Settlement Home. Courteous to the residents there, hospitable always to Members of the Association who wish to see the Home, careful as to the interests of the Association, yet always ready with some humorous remark which detaches her from any suspicion of sentimentality and with which she would hide, if she could, a large heartedness that not all of us are strong enough to bear with us throughout life.

ENGAGEMENT.

The engagement is announced of Miss Dorothy M. Brown to A. L. Wrightson, Esq. Miss Brown was trained at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and is a Member of the Association's Co-operation of Private Nurses. She has been the recipient of many expressions of goodwill from her colleagues on the Staff.

Miss Neighbour and Major Lowther wish to sincerely thank the Members of the R.B.N.A. for their good wishes on their approaching marriage, so kindly expressed in the January number of this JOURNAL, as well as in many personal letters received from Members.

DONATIONS.

GENERAL PURPOSES FUND.—Miss Sortwell, £1 1s.; Miss A. E. Rider, 10s. 6d.; Mrs. Bell, Miss E. A. Boldero, 10s.; Mrs. Maxwell St. John, Mrs. Strong, Misses Chippendale, Macleod-Orr, Orwin, Pemberton, Porter, Schuller, Shaw, Tisdall, 5s.; Misses. A. Curtis, F. E. Henderson, A. Johnson, 4s.; Mrs. Gurnett, 3s.; Mrs. Moorhead, Mrs. Tribble, Misses Anderton, Bellamy, A. E. Briggs, Fincher, Liddiatt, F. E. Terry, Whatling, 2s. 6d.; Misses Bowman, Cheetham, Glanville, Mothersill, Shephard, Stevenson,

2s.; Misses E. M. Dickson, E. Spearing, 1s. 6d.; Mrs. Sherliker, Mrs. Tozer, Misses Bates, Burnell, Coates, Cowie, Giffen, Hart, McDougall, Page-Henderson, Phillips, Rowe, 1s.

HOUSE BEAUTIFUL FUND.—Miss Isabel Macdonald, £5; Miss H. Lamb, £3 18s.; A.M.H.M., £2 2s.; Miss G. Neighbour, £1 17s.; Miss Dorrell, £1 2s.; Misses Christopherson, Treasure, £1 1s.; Mrs. Northwood, Misses A. E. Boldero, Fox, Kirby, F. Macdonald, McNaughton, £1; Miss Villiers, 15s.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Members are reminded that there are still a number of Subscriptions (due on January 1st) which have not yet been received. It will facilitate the work of administration if these are forwarded at an early date.

CLUB CALENDAR.

For Club Calendar refer to page 1 of the Advertisement Supplement.

ISABEL MACDONALD, *Secretary to the Corporation.*



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