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EDITORIAL.

HEADQUARTERS.

Ever since the foundation of The British College of Nurses the Trustees and the Council have had in mind the importance of securing adequate Headquarters which shall be a worthy shrine of all the activities which the College hopes to promote, which shall represent to the public the dignity and status of the Nursing Profession, and which shall be to its Fellows and Members a possession which they can regard with satisfaction, and to which they can introduce their friends with pleasure.

It is our privilege to announce in this issue that a Headquarters House which more than merits these requirements has been secured, and that at the meeting of the Council on February 26th the Treasurer, Dr. Bedford Fenwick, attended by special request, and announced to the Council the success of the negotiations which he had been conducting for some time for the possession of a fine mansion in Portland Place.

Thus within a year of its foundation the College has entered into possession of one of the most beautiful residences in the West End of London, and there, before many weeks have passed, the Fellows and Members will find their Headquarters, and we know that they will do so with joy, satisfaction, and pride.

But that pride is not merely pride of possession. The house, stately and beautiful, is concrete evidence of a dream come true. A dream that in such a centre shall be garnered forces which, guided and directed by trained and Registered Nurses, in accordance with their expert knowledge and conscience, shall result in the better education of nurses, and through them shall issue forth for raising the standard of health of all classes.

It is too soon to discuss the details of such schemes; they will not be decided until the Council has had the opportunity of conferring with its colleagues at home and abroad, but it is not too soon to realise how that Headquarters will stand for all that is best and noble; a testimony to the invincible power and ultimate triumph of principle, and it will be for ever a very precious possession to that little band of pioneers who have proved that if need be they are prepared to strip themselves of possessions in support of a principle, and that they are not prepared to sacrifice the right to self-government for anything which the world can offer.

There are unmistakable portents that the principle of self-government will ultimately be adopted by the Nursing Profession at large. In the meantime the British College of Nurses will faithfully guard it.

A LIFE'S VOCATION.

It is with much pleasure we announce that Her Royal Highness, Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles, has consented to open the new Nurses' Home of the Kent County Mental Hospital, Maidstone, next June, a gracious action which will, we feel sure, be received with widespread gratification by mental nurses.

This is not the first time that Princess Mary has shown her interest in the work of Mental Nurses, as she is Patroness of the Mental Hospital Matrons' Association, but the personal visit of Her Royal Highness to a Mental Hospital cannot fail to be productive of good.

Mental Nursing is, without question, the most difficult branch of our profession that can be adopted as a life's work. It is, therefore, specially important that it should attract the highest type of woman, one who realizes that to minister successfully to a mind diseased requires high qualities—both natural and acquired.

Those in attendance upon patients suffering from bodily sickness have their quick reward in the implicit confidence and touching appreciation they receive. Indeed, probably most nurses would own that the gratitude they as a rule receive is out of all proportion to the work performed.

With nurses of the mentally sick it is otherwise. It may be—it often is—that their utmost efforts for the good of their patients meet with suspicion instead of appreciation. It is easy and delightful to work in an atmosphere of goodwill, but it requires qualities of a far higher order to surround a patient with a mind diseased, who meets every endeavour to further his well being with suspicion and distrust, with the atmosphere of serenity, so essential to his welfare.

To do good, "hoping for nothing again," is the part of the mental nurse. Her compensation is a knowledge that she has endeavoured to lighten the burden of a great affliction, and perhaps has helped to restore to normal health, and to friends and relatives, patients under her care. For we no longer regard hospitals for the insane as "asylums," but as institutions in which, by every possible means, recovery is promoted, and in an increasing proportion of cases is attained.

The sustained interest of a Princess of the Royal House in the care of the insane, and of those attending upon them, should do much to draw attention to mental nursing as a career worthy of adoption by highly educated women. Many of the patients in mental hospitals are refined, clever, and even brilliant people, and to these a nurse who understands their outlook on life is a god-send in their isolation, and plays no small part as a remedial agent.

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