

GARDENS AND NURSES.

"God Almighty planted a garden; and indeed it is the purest of earthly pleasures."—*Francis Bacon.*

We learn that the scheme of opening the gardens for the benefit of the Queen's Institute of District Nursing is likely, this year, to be particularly successful in its results. That is not a matter for surprise in view of the beautiful, long summer days that this year's June has brought to us, June at whose feet every meadow and wood and roadside hastens to lay honours and our gardens most of all. It was indeed a real inspiration that brought about the scheme for opening these gardens, in order that they might become the means of providing part of the where-withal to bring highly efficient nursing into many homes that are dreary because they have no gardens, no singing of birds, but only the narrow, dusty streets and the never-ceasing roar of the traffic.

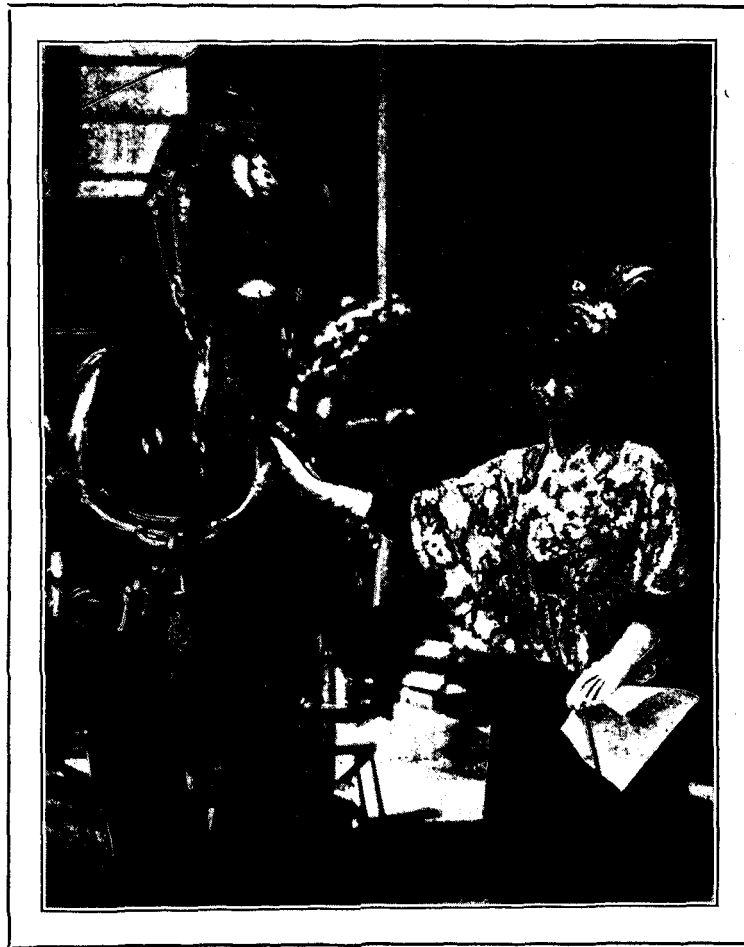
But virtue is not always its own and only reward. As we hear people talk, who have seen the gardens, we find ourselves wondering who benefit the most—those who find healing for their souls in the loveliness of these English gardens, laid out with such matchless taste as you will find nowhere else in the world, or those to whom healing for the body is brought through the generous hospitality and sacrifice of the people who throw wide the gates of the gardens, that thereby good nursing may be brought within reach of the poor?

Such a question came into our mind the other day when a nurse said "The love of gardens is a passion in me." She had journeyed up to London from the country and stayed the night in town so that she might leave by a very early train for Norfolk, in order to see the King's garden at Sandringham; she returned to town late in the evening and set off for home next day with, apparently, her whole life coloured by a beauty that, for her, would never pass into nothingness. Twice a week His Majesty has these gardens opened, and she told us of an eight mile drive through rhododendron woods, of beautiful

rock gardens and water lily ponds, of blue poppies, Chinese primulas and many rare plants, of wall gardens and pergolas hung with creepers, of splendid trees and velvety lawns. She described indeed a land of enchantment.

Once someone asked us the question—"Why is it that wherever you find nurses you find flowers?" We seem to have gone on asking ourselves that question and turning it over in our minds. One can scarcely imagine a sickroom without flowers and this may in part supply the answer. For beauty is, in some intangible way, a great source of healing; you may say that it merely acts through the mind, but, even so, this

does not alter the fact. It is obvious that those responsible, in these later days, for the administration of institutions for the insane or for patients suffering from nervous diseases, realise the benefits to be derived from beautiful grounds and gardens. And, if they bring help to minds in disorder, how much more should this be so for those whose minds are properly balanced, those who, though they cannot understand the secret workings of nature, can at least feel the delight to be found in the harmonies one experiences in the breath of the flower gardens and the glorious weaving of colour. But there are many relationships between the nurses and flowers. The pilgrim to Sandringham told us of another garden she knew where wild daffodils had, in a very few years, been cultivated to a stage of enormous height and beauty; for you



ALEXANDRA ROSE DAY, 1917.
Queen Alexandra leaving Marlborough House to drive through London.

can work creatively with flowers. Of another once beautiful garden she told us where, owing to bad times, four gardeners were employed instead of twenty and the fine rhododendrons, cultivated to highest perfection a few years ago were reverting to their wilder types. There were not men enough to care for the hygiene and the healing of that garden. And there may be other more unconscious relationships between the human and the plant kingdoms. Life in its healthiest and most harmonious forms exists in the latter kingdom; here there are no disturbances of emotion or passion to inter-

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