

## NURSING ECHOES.

Our new Queen is of royal descent. Queen Elizabeth is the first Lady of Scottish birth to be on the Throne since "The Lady Matilda of Scotland" (daughter of Queen Margaret and Malcolm Canmore), who was the wife of Henry I of England, and who founded the hospital of St. Giles. Also she helped women in childbirth. Henry I gave the first Charter to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, so that Queen Elizabeth should have a special interest in our first Royal Hospital.

An event of the utmost importance to the Nursing Profession in England and Wales is the erection of a permanent Headquarters in Portland Place, London, provided by the Registered Nurses, in which their Governing Body, the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, can conduct their responsible duties. We wonder if the Registered Nurses realise the significance of this lordly building!

Half-a-century ago a few inspired nurses met nearby and founded the British Nurses' Association with the aim of providing a system of Registration of Trained Nurses, and thus protecting, not only their own welfare, but also that of the community. For 30 years this group fought strenuously for the Act of Parliament, which was made law in 1919, establishing statutory education and registration, and establishing a Governing Body for the Nursing Profession. For the future all will depend upon the conscience of the Registered Nurses if their new Headquarters is to be held in honour by the community or not.

The annual meeting of the Central Council for District Nursing in London was held on Thursday in the County Hall, Westminster Bridge Road, Sir William J. Collins presiding.

On the proposal of Sir Francis Morris, chairman of the executive committee, the council adopted a motion for the appointment of an executive committee of not more than 30 members, in addition to *ex-officio* members, with powers to inquire into the adequacy and efficiency of district nursing within the County of London, to report on improving the arrangements, and to consider the extension of the work beyond the area of the County of London.

We have never been a League of Nations woman, as its political basis is illogical, and even its huge expenditure cannot make it effective, but in the promotion of International standards of health its influence might become invaluable.

Professor G. E. Gask, of the University of London, in a lecture he gave recently at the Royal College of Surgeons, quoted unpublished facts concerning the medical work of John Hunter in the campaign in Portugal, 1762-63, and of his life in a base hospital in Lisbon, where apparently trained women nurses were also employed a century before Florence Nightingale took them to the Crimea.

As reported in *The Times*, Professor Gask explained that he had arranged the papers concerning Hunter

which the college acquired in 1934 when the Loudoun Letters came into the market. The manuscripts were the property originally of John Campbell, Earl of Loudoun, who commanded the British Forces in the allied campaign in Portugal.

Hunter came to London in 1748, and on October 30th, 1760, he was given a commission in the Army by Robert Adair, the Robin Adair of the well-known ballad, who was Inspector-General of Hospitals. Five months later he sailed from Spithead with an expeditionary force of 10,000 under General Hodgson to capture Belleisle. In 1762 he went to Portugal to serve on the staff of the only military hospital at Lisbon.

It was interesting to note, Professor Gask said, that female nurses were included in this expeditionary force and were attached to the staff of the hospital. The matron was Mrs. Sullivan, who received 2s. 6d. a day, and there were two head nurses, Mary Fenton, and Ann Millross, who, with three cooks, received 1s. a day each in pay. There were also five washermen, who received 1s. a day, and 18 women nurses, who received 6d. a day.

It might come as a surprise to many that female nurses were employed in military hospitals before the time of Florence Nightingale. They were used, however, in the wars in Ireland in the time of William and Mary, and also in the Seven Years' War in the campaigns in Germany. There was no evidence of the qualifications and training of those nurses. Pargellis, who wrote on Lord Loudoun's campaign in North America, said the nurses probably came from the ranks of the women who followed the Army. This might be so, Professor Gask said, but the fact that there was a regular establishment with a matron and two head nurses in control made one think that they were specially picked and appointed from home, and it seemed likely that they were collected from the nurses in the civil hospitals.

This report inspired Miss Annette M. B. Meakin, of Freiburg, Germany, to send the following letter to *The Times*: "Your report of Professor Gask's interesting lecture at the Royal College of Surgeons in your issue of February 16th brings to my mind the fact that there were female nurses on the hospital ship which accompanied Anson's fleet when it set out for the raid on St. Malo in June, 1758. In Corbett's 'England in the Seven Years' War,' we read that this hospital ship was named the *King of Prussia*. Its sanitation was particularly detailed, and it would appear that Army nurses were here mentioned for the first time in British warfare. The surgeons of each regiment that embarked were to provide one nurse for the hospital ship. Each of the nurses was to be 'a sober woman that had no child to carry with her.' A complete set of bedding was sent with each nurse, who was to have the King's allowance of diet and 6d. a day wages."

We all remember the charming little Princess Marie José of Belgium as a frequent guest in England during the Great War, and have followed with sympathy

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