

than ever,' and the Duchess, abandoning her card table, sat talking to her the whole evening without sleepiness. During dinner there had not been much talk. The table was long, the company sparse; Sir James, after his fashion, had sat mute; and it is hardly surprising that shyness quenched the Duchess's intention of proposing the health of the heroine. Later her pent-up emotion brimmed over and her conversation was punctuated with such interjections as, 'It seems to me like a dream to see her there!' It was a singular testimony to the force of Miss Nightingale's personality that she kept her royal hostess awake all the evening, for the rhythms of the Duchess's life were slowing down."

Let there be no mistake that District Nursing is of national importance, and in the future, will, we hope, be recognised as such. The following correspondence appeared recently addressed to the Editor of *The Times*, and we are indebted to Miss R. E. Darbyshire, C.B.E., R.R.C., for her claim that V.A.D.s need professional direction.

District Nurses,

SIR,—My committee is responsible for the district nursing for Gloucestershire, and, under the county council, for the midwifery services for the county, and we view with grave concern the continued reduction in the numbers of our nurses for various national services, and in response to appeals to return to hospital work. This shortage of nurses is inflicting serious hardship on those who are still working in their districts, on account of their very long hours and lack of leisure. It also constitutes a real danger to the mothers, both in scarcity of midwives and their over-worked condition. On the other hand, we see 50-bed Red Cross convalescent hospitals with two and even three fully trained nurses, in spite of the fact that the nursing required in this type of hospital could be adequately performed by intelligent V.A.D.s under the supervision of one trained nurse.—Yours, etc.,

EVELYN N. HARFORD, *Chairman*,
Gloucestershire County Nursing Association.

SIR,—Mrs. Harford's letter in *The Times*, which relates the shortage of district nurses to the employment of what she considers an excessive number of trained nurses in our auxiliary hospitals and convalescent homes, may give rise to a great deal of misapprehension of the facts, which I should like to dispel immediately. Except in one or two special cases, trained nurses engaged in district nursing have never been accepted for enrolment on our reserve, as we consider them to be engaged on work of great national importance, and when such applications are refused this reason is given and the nurses concerned are advised to remain at their posts. If district nursing were regarded by all other nursing services as a strictly reserved branch of the profession there would not be the present shortage.

Of the trained nurses at present employed in our convalescent homes in Gloucestershire, only two are qualified midwives and in only two homes (where there are a considerable number of bed cases) are there more than two trained nurses employed. However intelligent V.A.D. members may be, their intelligence needs professional direction where nursing matters are concerned. These homes should never be left without a trained nurse, and as it is obviously impracticable for one to be on duty continuously, two is the minimum that can be employed.

Yours faithfully,

R. E. DARBYSHIRE, *Matron-in-Chief*,
Trained Nurses' Department, British Red Cross
Society and Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES, LTD.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Annual General Meeting of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., was held at Headquarters, 19, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7, on Wednesday, May 6th, at 3 p.m. Owing to a wealth of lovely flowers, most artistically arranged—all the gifts of friends—it was agreed that the beautiful house was a very desirable centre for professional women to take counsel together for the uplifting of Nursing standards, and the cementing of friendship.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, S.R.N., President, was in the Chair. The following Members of the Council were also amongst those present: Miss Mary S. Cochrane, R.R.C., S.R.N.; Miss Elizabeth Brodie, R.G.N.; Miss Alice M. Bushby, S.R.N.; Miss Helena McLoughlin, S.R.N.; and Miss Susan A. Villiers, J.P., S.R.N. Owing to difficulty of transport and great stress of work many regrets for non-attendance were received.

The President called on the Secretary (Miss A. S. Bryson) to read the notice convening the meeting. This done, and prayers having been read, the Minutes of the last meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COLLEGE FOR 1941-1942.

The following Report from the Council (abridged) was read by the President:—

The General Meeting has been summoned in May instead of July, because it must be held within three months of incorporation by the Board of Trade.

In presenting the Annual Report for 1941-1942, it is deeply regretted that the normal activities of the College have naturally had to be curtailed owing to the serious War conditions which now prevail, but we have to congratulate ourselves that the College has remained open during the whole year, and that the business has been carefully conducted.

The Incorporation of the College.

It was agreed at the last Annual Meeting that the College be incorporated under the Companies Act, 1929, without the word "Limited," to qualify to administer the Trust Fund.

Consequently a Memorandum and Articles of Association drafted by the Solicitor were considered, amended and adopted by the Council and submitted to the Attorney-General, who agreed to them without altering one word. They were then submitted to the Board of Trade asking for incorporation without the word "Limited." The Board of Trade refused unless certain provisions were eliminated.

As, in the opinion of the Council, this demand prevented the Fellows and Members enjoying certain privileges such as benevolent help, legal assistance and freedom of action in certain particulars, the Council decided to retain the original Memorandum and Articles of Association and applied to be registered as a Company with the word "Limited."

The Council then learned that the right of the College to incorporation under its present title "The British College of Nurses" had to be submitted to the Registrar of the Companies Act to ascertain if the title were available.

The Registrar replied that the title was not available until the consent had been obtained of the two existing Royal Corporations of Nurses, the Royal British Nurses' Association and the Royal College of Nursing.

The Solicitor communicated with the two Royal Corporations. The consent of the Royal British Nurses' Association was at once available, but the Royal College of Nursing refused consent, failing to advance, in writing, any substantial reason for refusal.

The Council unanimously questioned the right of the Royal College of Nursing to override the decision of the Judge in

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