

Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses.

The Report of the Council of the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses for 1904, to the Queen, contains the important announcement that since the last Report was submitted to her Majesty a new Supplemental Charter has been granted to the Institute, which henceforth will be governed by its provision. The chief alterations are that her Majesty is constituted Patron of the Institute, and that the *ex-officio* position of the Master of St. Katherine's as President of the Institute is abolished, subject to the tenure of the present Master.

Reviewing the work accomplished during the fifteen years of the Institute's existence, the Council say that it is a striking feature that the principles adopted at the first remain practically unaltered, and the Council have increasing confidence in those methods, which have proved adaptable to the varying conditions of town and country. The special training of nurses in district nursing, and the systematic inspection of their work after training, are the main principles which the Council have always kept before them, and their importance and value in producing and maintaining a high and satisfactory standard of work are more and more evident as time goes on.

The chief anxiety is the financial position of the Institute. At the end of the present year the sum collected in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee will be exhausted, and the interest of the Women's Memorial Fund is insufficient to fill the gap. In spite of every economy the expenditure falls short of the income by £2,000, and there is no margin for necessary extension.

The Council of the Institute was represented by Miss Guthrie Wright at the Home Relief Congress held in Edinburgh in July, and also at the Sanitary Congress in Glasgow in August. At the latter a short paper was read by the Council's representative on "District Nursing as a Hygienic Agency."

The Report states that in three instances County Councils, with whom rests the responsibility of arranging for the supervision of practising midwives, have appointed the County Superintendent of the Institute as Inspector of Midwives for the county. The Council of the Institute has decided, under certain conditions, to allow Queen's Nurses to accept posts as Inspectors of Midwives, while retaining their position on the Roll as Queen's Nurses. During the year two Queen's Nurses of the oldest standing—Miss E. D. Burke, of Southampton, and Miss Florence Saunders, of Peterborough—have passed away. The endowment of the Home which Miss Saunders had presented to the Peterborough Association was an unsolicited memorial, which is a witness to the affection and appreciation in which she was held among those to whom she devoted herself during the greater part of her life.

Ambidexterity.

By ambidexterity we mean an equal use of the right and left hands—a practice which, in the light of modern developments, especially in the direction of child culture, is shown to be of importance for many reasons.

In a lecture delivered at the rooms of the Statistical Society the other day, Mr. Noble Smith, F.R.C.S.Ed., President of the Ambidextral Culture Society, spoke of the matter from the surgeon's point of view. He pointed out that the excessive use of the right arm influences the production of spinal curvature, among other postural deformities, and he gave statistics from English and French observers showing the large proportion of right to left-handed curves.

Referring to postures of rest in contradistinction to active postures, Mr. Noble Smith took objection to the ordinary school seats and desks, which encourage the tendency to stoop and to lean on the left arm. The best position, he said, for reading, writing, and drawing was the prone position, lying on what is commonly known as the stomach. This allowed the spine to assume a natural shape, the chest was expanded, and the effort to raise the head had a beneficial effect on the muscles of the neck and spine.

A good exercise for correcting the tendency to the right to left curvature of the spine is to sit on a chair or high stool, grasp the seat with the left hand, and pull strenuously with it, while raising the right hand as high as possible above the head. This also helps to prevent that droop of the right shoulder which is frequently noticeable in conjunction with the over-use of the right arm.

Hippocrates says that a woman is never ambidextral; but perhaps the development of the sex has altered since his day, for I am intimately acquainted with one woman who uses her left hand equally as well as her right in sewing, cutting, carving, drawing, &c. The practice is certainly a good one to cultivate, or rather, to be allowed to develop, for there is much to be said in favour of the theory that a child, left naturally to itself, will be ambidextral. In accordance, however, with prejudice or habit, we promptly correct the child when it proceeds to wield its pencil, knife, or spoon with the left hand. I have even heard mothers and nurses advised to check their own tendency to always nurse a baby on the left arm, as, by thus keeping the child's right arm in a cramped position, they are likely to make it left-handed!

In all professions into which mechanical skill enters, but, above all, in those of the surgeon and the nurse, the power of free and dexterous use of the left hand as well as the right is found to be of inestimable value. The savage races are said to use their weapons equally with either hand; but then they have no table niceties wherewith to destroy this facility.

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