

## The International Conference on Nursing.

(Continued from page 489, Vol. xxxviii.)

MORNING SESSION.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19th.

### THE PUBLIC AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRAINED NURSE.

At the Morning Session the President was Mme. Alphen Salvador, who throughout identified herself with the Conference and was present at all the Sessions.

#### THE SCOPE OF THE MATERNITY NURSE.

By MISS MARGARET BREAY.

Miss Breay said the real point at issue was whether the ministrations of any motherly woman who has seen a few maternity cases are sufficient for a lying-in patient, or whether such a patient requires a skilled nurse. She thought that the highest and most intelligent skill, and the best women the nursing profession can produce, are needed for this work, especially in the homes of the poor in England and Wales, where the mortality from puerperal fever is as high as ever, although in the lying-in hospitals it has been practically stamped out.

What should be the extent of the training of a maternity nurse? She should be well educated, and have had general nursing training with instruction in midwifery. It is easier for a well-educated woman to grasp and practise aseptic principles. The three great branches of our work, medical, surgical, and obstetric nursing, should be included in the educational curriculum of every nurse. This triple training is most important for ward sisters, and also for private nurses for any serious disease in a pregnant woman may become complicated with premature labour. In regard to whether a maternity nurse should be a midwife, Miss Breay said she thought it safer, as maternity nurses, whether trained in midwifery or not, often had to act as midwives. The educated maternity nurse could be a great educative factor in the dissemination of the knowledge of hygiene, which would have an appreciable effect in raising the standard of national health.

#### MATERNAL AID.

By DR. DUBRISAY.

Dr. Dubrisay took as his subject "Maternal Aid," and said that a Society had been formed in Paris which it was hoped would start work in the autumn, which had the support of M. Mesureur and others.

The object of this Society was (1) to help necessitous women in childbirth, who remain at home, and have the services of the municipal midwife, who, having accomplished her task, leaves the poor woman at the end of ten days.

(2) To help those who go into the maternity hospitals and return to their homes and work before they are well enough. To put their babies out in farms to be nursed at a low cost of about 10 francs (8 shillings) a month if needed.

(3) To find work for the mothers. It is also proposed to open a house where children of both sexes will be admitted up to the age of five years, and taken care of while the mother is unable to look after them.

#### ASSISTANCE TO THE WIVES AND CHILDREN OF WORKING MEN.

By Mlle. CHAPTAL.

It was stated by Mlle. Chaptal that the City of Paris works seven "consultations" for infants at its own expense, and three in the suburbs, all in populous districts, which give free milk for the infants of women who attend regularly. In 1906, 941 children were helped, 218 only being nursed by the mother. Undeniable as are the advantages of this free milk for infants, yet it has dangers, for to give free milk to a mother before being assured that she cannot suckle her child is to offer a premium for weaning, and this should only be done on medical advice after examination of the mother. The mother needing help for her babe should attend the dispensary before the birth, where she could be taught how best to nourish the coming child, and, if necessary, receive food suitable to her condition. This need not increase expenses, as it has been found in connection with the Dispensary known as "l'Assistance Maternelle," that since this plan has been adopted, more children have been breast fed. In 1905, 66 nursing mothers were helped, and milk given to 129 infants at a cost of £516 6s. In 1906 91 nursing mothers were helped, and milk given to 97 infants, the expenses being only £438. In addition to this a woman is appointed to do the household work during the lying-in period, so avoiding the necessity for the patient to go to hospital. This has produced the very best results, the mortality of infants falling from 14.1 per cent. in 1901 to 6.9 per cent. in 1906, that of regular attendants at the Dispensary being 2 per cent.

#### THE WAR AGAINST INFANTILE MORTALITY.

By FRAULEIN ERNA WEYDEMANN.

It was stated by Fraulein Weydemann that 400,000 children under one year old die in Germany annually. To lessen this terrible mortality it was necessary to teach the young expectant mothers to prepare for their future duties, chiefly that of suckling their newly born children. For this purpose the delivery should take place, if possible, in lying-in hospitals or midwives' homes, which are under legal supervision, so enabling mother and child to be together, and preventing too early return to work. When work must be resumed, and perhaps some artificial feeding necessary, then "milk cake" can be used. This is prepared under municipal supervision, and can be obtained in all towns. In connection with this municipal oversight doctors are ready to give help in word and deed. "For the doctor," said Fraulein Weydemann, "will not, as formerly, be called to the bedside of the sick child, but will act as counsellor when the child is well." Efforts are being made to

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)