

What better opportunity could there be for lowering the average of the Nurse's salary and for resisting the just demand for an open and variable wage maximum? Would she not be provided for by annuity, and would not various benevolent people have made gifts toward the support of her declining years? It is unfortunately true that many people prefer benevolence to fairness, and would rather do a charity than pay what a service is worth.

Looking at it from a financial standpoint, where are the advantages of a pension fund? To return any substantial profit there must be a large capital. Can Nurses raise the necessary thousands? Hardly. And who will, then? The 'benevolent-minded people'? Who will do the work of book-keeping, investing, investigating, report making, and attend to all the innumerable minutiae of such a complicated piece of work as it would be? Can Nurses afford to pay the proper officials a proper salary? If they can, where will be the profits to themselves; and if not, will they expect people to do this work for nothing? As a matter of fact, it has been amply proved by Nurses' own statements in this magazine, that there are enough reliable channels of investment open to women nowadays to make it quite unnecessary to go into any special venture, such as the proposed pension fund. Although all insurance companies will not take women, yet some good ones do, and money may be invested on the tontine, or some like plan, to be returned with profit during life. Building loan associations also provide for the return, at a specified time, of capital and profits; or, for individual investments, hardly any Nurse can be so desolate as to be without some man relation or friend who is trustworthy and who will advise her as to the best disposition of her money. Of course it may be said that such investments are likely to prove failures and the earnings be swept away. While this is true enough, yet a certain amount of risk attends all we do on this planet, and can even a pension fund promise perpetual solvency and unfailingly high dividends?

It is not probable that this project will meet with the support of the training schools. They all have their alumnae societies, and one of the earliest cares of alumnae is for help and relief to one another in illness. This may be called a narrowing of interests, yet, if each school cares for its own, there must obviously be a material lessening of the burden of the whole. It cannot but be conceded by intelligent people that the superintendents of training schools must necessarily have the interests of their profession as closely at heart as any other set of people could possibly have. Not only that, but their very work and environment must inevitably make them the best judges of what is really advantageous for Nurses. They have already tacitly, at least, pronounced on the merits of a pension fund scheme. They are not much given to considering questions sentimentally, and, if they do not readily embrace a pension fund, it must be because they do not see it as a desirable or important thing. The hope of a national association does, indeed, lie close to the hearts of all who have worked for the progress of Nurses and Nursing, but a financial project cannot be the foundation on which to build it. Only upon an educational basis can a national association of Nurses successfully and honourably rest, and for this the training schools of the country are preparing and towards this they are striving. A national association must primarily mean a national union for the ethical and practical perfection of our work as Nurses; for the standardising of our teaching; for the strict governing of our professional relations, and for our protection against quackery, pretenders and imposition. While it is conceivable that in the future some such mutual insurance concern as a pension fund might develop as an arm of a national association of Nurses, it is quite inconceivable that a national association of Nurses could come into being as an incidental in the establishment of a pension fund.

L. L. Dock.

Harrisburg, Pa., May 9, 1895."

Medical Matters.

SUTURE OF BONES.



A FRENCH surgeon has recently communicated to a Paris Society the case of a man who, by a fall, fractured the lower end of the femur into three fragments. Under ordinary treatment, it is more than doubtful whether an accurate and successful union could have been obtained, and the surgeon in question therefore opened the knee joint, and placing the fragments of the bones together in their proper positions, fixed them together by sutures. The patient made an excellent recovery, and twelve months afterwards, although the knee was still slightly swollen, and the injured limb a little shorter than the other, he could flex and extend his leg freely, the patella was movable, and he was able to walk without any difficulty and to follow his ordinary occupation. At any rate, it is beyond dispute that this excellent result could hardly have been obtained after such an accident by ordinary splint treatment.

ABDOMINAL VARICES.

A FRENCH physician has recently called the attention of the profession to a case in which large and numerous lymphatic swellings were observed in the abdominal wall of a patient suffering from cirrhosis of the liver due to alcoholism. These disappeared after the patient had been tapped and a large amount of fluid removed from the abdominal cavity; and it was thought there must be some pressure in these cases upon the lymphatic canals of the abdomen in consequence of which there had been set up a compensatory enlargement of the superficial lymphatics. It appears that the speakers at the Congress to which the communication was made, were not aware of the fact to which attention was drawn some years ago in Germany, by Professor Braune, that in these cases it is by no means unusual to have enlargement not only of the lymphatic canals on the abdominal wall, but also of the superficial vessels. The pressure which the hepatic contraction naturally causes on the circulation through the liver frequently causes this latter condition to be met with in such cases. But in view of the comparative rarity of the lymphatic enlargement it would be well for Nurses who are in charge of such cases to carefully note and report to the doctor the occurrence of such enlarged veins or lymphatic canals on the surface of the abdomen.

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