

assisted along that important trade route, and so to other parts of the world. It is comforting to remember that just as the progress of sanitation has to a large extent already limited, or altogether prevented, the spread of epidemics, and has largely controlled the course and devastation of the Plague, so there is a probability that the disease will be soon attacked in its very strongholds, and that by proper drainage and sanitary improvements the world may be as freed from it in future, as England and Europe already are.

#### RHEUMATIC FEVER.

THE acute inflammation of the larger joints of the body, and especially of the limbs, to which this term is applied, holds a very different position in the estimation of medical men now to that which it occupied only thirty years ago. Then, there was an active discussion as to whether the best treatment was by means of blisters to the affected joints, or by the administration of coloured water; one school holding that blistering relieved the patient's pain, and considerably lessened both the severity and the length of the disease; the other side assumed that the disease, under any circumstances, would run a specified course, and that all medicines did harm rather than good by attempting to divert its progress. Then the discovery of the specific effect of salicylic acid was made, and, to the astonishment both of older practitioners and of those patients who had suffered from attacks before, the disease was cut short and practically cured within twelve hours. With this diminution in the length and intensity of the attack, the liability to affections of the heart was materially reduced; so that it is, nowadays, by no means unusual to find patients, who have had more than one attack of rheumatic fever, quite free from any valvular affection; whereas, formerly, it was the very rare exception to find such immunity, even after one illness. The further benefits of this need hardly be pointed out. A patient whose heart was thus injured, was for the rest of his life always more or less of an invalid; always more or less subject to attacks of severe lung or kidney complications. Life Insurance Offices would not accept him; and as a natural consequence he always regarded himself as physically unsound—a sure prelude sooner or later to mental anxiety and depression. In short, the future lives of such patients were always more or less crippled.

## The Nursing Conference.

### A PRACTICAL STANDARD OF NURSING.

By MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK.

(Continued from page 48).

#### THE MAKING OF MATRONS.

Again, the vast importance of the personality and expert knowledge of nursing and domestic management in all its details of the woman who is to act as Matron and Principal of a Nursing School cannot be over-estimated. What of her training? Can we recognize as satisfactory the manner in which Matrons are now selected and appointed—by Committees entirely composed of men—who have no knowledge of her work, and are, therefore, very often incapable of judging justly of her qualifications? Men usually judge women by their appearance, and is it not an open secret that a pretty face and a smart figure is preferred before a more worthy, if less attractive, candidate? And have we not all felt convinced that some of the very best women we know have been passed over by this surface selection? I will say little of selection by favour; that is another danger in these days of keen competition. I am told on good authority that a Matron was lately appointed to a county hospital upon the telegraphic recommendation of the chairman of a metropolitan hospital at which she was a sister—and this the night before the day of appointment, and after the date for receiving applications. I would urge, therefore, that a course of supplementary education should be defined for those women desirous of fitting themselves for the responsibilities of Superintendents. Perhaps, somewhat, on the following lines: When certificated they should be placed in charge as night superintendents and sisters of wards, home sisters and housekeepers, and spend a certain time in the linenry, laundry, and Matron's office. Experience as an Assistant Matron would also be invaluable. A supplementary certificate, for not less than twelve months' work, in such positions might be awarded, signed by the Matron, to those nurses who proved themselves efficient in performing the duties of the various departments. Such a certificate would prove of great value to committees in the selection of superintendents of training schools. Nevertheless, we must remember rulers are born—not made. We ask for practical training to make them judicious and worthy rulers.

So much for the Standard of Professional Education

#### EXAMINATIONS.

The important question of examinations stands next on our list and I would suggest the examination of Probationers should include preliminary, intermediate, and final examinations.

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