

## The Jubilee Congress of District Nursing.

FRIDAY, MAY 14th.

On Friday, May 14th, the second day of the Jubilee Congress of District Nursing at Liverpool, there were again large audiences at the three Sessions in the Central Hall, Renshaw Street, and the interest was sustained throughout.

### SESSION I.

Sir Thomas Hughes presided at the Opening Session, at which School Nursing in connection with District Work was discussed. The Chairman said that his connection with district nursing dated back to 1897, when, as Lord Mayor of the city, he made an appeal for a fund to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The money raised was devoted to district nursing, and what had been a semi-private institution became a branch of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses.

Mr. HERBERT R. RATHBONE presented the first paper in this Session, and said that in 1895 Mr. Rathbone decided to try in Liverpool an experiment carried on for two or three years previously by Mrs. Leon in the Vere Street Board School, London, of engaging a nurse to go to some of the elementary schools and there attend to the minor ailments of the children. Many of them were found to be suffering from such ailments, while others were suffering from ailments of a more serious character, requiring immediate medical attention. In the more serious cases the parents were urged through the teachers to get the medical attention required. About six or seven years ago the Committee of the District Nursing Association, impressed with the importance of the work, decided to take it over, and pay the nurse who up till that time had been privately employed. Now four nurses give their whole time on school days to the work, and two of the district nurses each attend one school on one day a week.

When the Act providing for the Medical Inspection of School Children came into operation in 1908, a School Medical Officer with a staff of assistants was appointed. In Liverpool the Lady Sanitary Inspectors act as Assistants to the School Medical Officer.

The Education Committee are now being asked to pay a substantial part of the cost of the School Nursing Staff, as the District Nursing Committee feel that the experimental stage of the work is now past, and it should be officially recognised and supported by the Education Authority.

Dr. HAYWARD, of Wimbledon, described the system of school nursing adopted in South Wimbledon, where there are rather a large number of wealthy residents, and about 6,000 school children. When first appointed School Medical Officer, he said that he felt thoroughly stranded. Some one was needed to carry out the necessary treatment, or the Medical Officer was in danger of becoming

an inspecting machine, who reported evils without possessing the means of remedying them. The Education Authority then granted two nurses, and Dr. Hayward laid great stress on the nurse attending with the doctor at the schools. The nurses were of great value at the medical inspection, they wrote up notes, were specially useful when the girls were examined, and also were a direct means of communication with the parents. The advent of the school nurses has effected a revolution in matters of cleanliness. Indeed, cleanliness was becoming fashionable, and social codes were more potent influences than any enforced rules and regulations. Then the nurse advised the teachers as to the exclusion of children; previously this was done by the teachers. The nurses got quite clever in recognising whom to exclude, and very seldom made a mistake. School nursing afforded opportunities to the Nursing Profession of becoming a great educational factor, and social influence. Nurses in this branch were much more than attendants on minor ailments.

Mr. H. SUTTON TIMMIS contributed an interesting paper on School Nursing in Widnes, which was the first authority in the British Islands to have a trained nurse for the systematic examination of school children as a regular member of their educational staff, Nurse Starbuck being appointed to the position.

Mr. Timmis concluded by expressing the opinion that the days of the School Nurse are numbered. There are, he said, influences at work against her. He was touching on a delicate subject, but in many towns the life of a medical man was hard, and his fees small, perhaps 1s. or even 6d., with a bottle of medicine thrown in. It was easy to see that a doctor in a town of that sort would or might resent a nurse dressing over 89,000 cases in the year, as in Widnes. That meant so many shillings or sixpences out of the medical man's pocket. Naturally on these fees there was a difficulty in making a living, and the doctor felt he had every right to object. He could imagine the medical men binding themselves together, and through the Medical Officer of Health becoming antagonistic to School Nurses.

Mme. JACQUES, Matron of the Training School for Nurses at the Salpêtrière Hospital, under the Assistance Publique, Paris, read an interesting paper, referring first to the foundation of the School "destined to supply the hospitals centralised in Paris under the direction of the Administration Générale de l'Assistance Publique," and then to the necessity for hospital trained nurses in the primary schools.

Mme. Jacques said: The primary school is *par excellence* the hot bed of epidemics; it is also the centre for sores, dirt, and slight chronic illnesses; why not add to the four rules the elementary *rules of hygiene*. The teachers know their duties, they give theoretical lessons and try to realise the necessary care foreseen in the rules of the school. They cannot leave their desk, and teach hygiene by practice; it is necessary to have a competent person, *having gone through a complete professional instruction*.

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