

national congress for the study of the social evil was held; four years ago the American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis was founded. There are evidences that the stir of propaganda is reaching into our training schools, and it is high time it should do so, for, against the urgent call for the thousands of intelligent women in the nursing field to become missionaries of prevention on these lines, stands the fact that the great majority of nurses are, as yet, little more informed upon the great social facts of these diseases than are the laity.

In preparation for this paper I made a series of inquiries in training schools which led me to conclude that, while routine procedures of disinfection are generally taught, information is generally lacking as to the extent, prevalence, relation to conditions of society, and, above all, prevention of venereal disease.

To a hundred or more letters sent out, asking several questions, I received in all 74 replies. In 54 of the schools replying some instruction was given. That it was usually somewhat scanty and limited pretty closely to hints for avoiding infection was evident, many replies running thus:—"Teaching given to a limited extent"; "two or three lectures"; "only for self-protection"; "how to protect themselves and other patients."

However, a growing feeling of the need for more thorough teaching was shown in a number of replies—thus: "I think everyone should know enough of these diseases to do her part toward the bettering of humanity by their prevention"; "we all feel that it is most important for nurses to have definite instruction on this subject"; "I would say most emphatically that such teaching should be given"; "personally I think it is a most important subject, and that all nurses should be given instruction along these lines"; "I most emphatically believe that all women, not nurses alone, should know about these dreadful diseases"; "personally I think it is a crime not to teach this subject to nurses"; "I feel very strongly the need of such teaching, not only for nurses, but people in general"; "I feel very deeply the necessity for a systematic course of some kind on this subject, but as yet I have not seen my way to undertake it; I feel, though, that the time is at hand"; "I consider this teaching a most necessary part of a nurse's training."

The methods now being worked out by the different Superintendents are suggestive, and seem to point to a special mission of the woman physician to carry this propaganda: and here, in passing, we must remember that the first pioneer women in medicine did sound this note

at the very outset of their career, and if search were made it would probably be found that their brave words set flowing the current of ideas now moving the leaders of the medical section of the societies of prophylaxis.\* One Superintendent writes: "I determined last year that a system of very plain teaching should be substituted for the extremely fragmentary method that formerly prevailed. The lecturer on skin diseases had previously given some instruction on the subject of syphilis, but he had handled the subject so gingerly that most of the facts I wanted emphasised were not touched upon, and this year a woman physician was asked to give the lectures and demonstrations, describing the way infection is carried, its effect on the organs and offspring, the causes of sterility, etc., etc., and finally the social aspect. Her manner of handling the subject was particularly fine, and her manner of gentle dignity quickly brought the class from a tense, strained attitude to one of interest and attention." Another says: "Since the publication of Dr. Marian C. Potter's lectures on Venereal Prophylaxis in the *American Journal of Nursing* I have used them for class work in the senior year." Three other answers mention class teaching by women physicians.

A number of Superintendents speak of intending to introduce this teaching. Among those reporting no teaching some of the answers are: "I think it should be given, and intend to try to bring it about in future"; "I think enough has not been done along this line"; "I have not seen my way clear to arrange for it, but shall try to do so"; "I believe if the subject were properly handled it might with benefit be added to our curriculum." Two speak of definite obstacles: "Our Superintendent and physicians do not approve"; "the medical men would not approve of its being taught." These are, however, the only suggestions of opposition. The majority of our training school heads are not expected to ask the directors' and physicians' assent in matters of class teaching and lec-

\* Dr. Elizabeth Blackwood said in letter to her sister:—"I do not know if I have ever told you how deep this matter of licentiousness has gradually sunk into my soul, and that the determination to wage a war of extermination with it strengthens continually, and the hope of gaining power and experience to do it worthily is one of my strongest supports in action. So help me God, I will not be blind, indifferent, or stupid in relation to this matter, as are most women. The world can never be redeemed until this central relation of life is placed on a truer footing."—*Woman Journal*, June 12th, '09. She is living in Hastings, England, 89 years old.

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