Nursing as a Profession.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, who presented the next paper, said that the fundamental attraction of nursing as a profession for women was that it satisfied the higher attributes of feeling which were so intimately connected with a woman's brain, and combined skilled scientific work with the qualities of mind synchronised in sympathy, one of the most extraordinarily forceful powers in the world. Without this quality of sympathy, or pitifulness for suffering in all its forms, a nurse, however technically perfect, would never be first rate, for the inspiration and essence of nursing were due to the temperament and trained character of the woman.

There was a current idea that temperament had nothing to do with mentality, and a crude line of demarcation was often drawn between them, but the brain was the guiding influence of everything physical, and this line of demarcation could not be maintained. Many delicate shades of feeling went to make temperament, and the best nurse was the one who was most highly sensitised. The sympathy of the nurse, conveyed in every touch and action, rather than in words, was a most potent factor in the healing of the sick.

To fashion so delicate an implement as the ideal nurse out of uncultured and uncouth material was an almost impossible task. The highest type of women were needed as probationers, and it required generations of culture—a culture not confined to any one class—to produce the best material.

Mrs. Fenwick referred to the responsibility of the Superintendents of training schools in the selection and training of probationers, because, owing to the lack of definite standards in nursing education, the quality of that education depended to a very large extent upon the Superintendents, and the reputation which a school had acquired during the matronship of a lady under whose direction a high standard of nursing had been maintained might speedily deteriorate under the supernitendence of one with lower ideals and less practical knowledge.

The speaker also showed that the fact that the training schools for nurses are organised as a necessary adjunct to a hospital, rather than primarily as educational institutions, had been prejudicial to their development. She urged as imperative that the standard of education of nurses should be defined and controlled by the State, and thought that until this was done, and a legal status conferred on nurses who have fulfilled the prescribed curriculum, many desirable women would enter other professions which were better organised, to the loss of the nursing profession and the public.

District Nursing.

Lady Hermione Blackwood, who next dealt with district nursing, has had experience of the work both as a Queen's Nurse and occasionally as an Assistant Inspector of Queen's Nurses. She spoke of the beginnings of district nursing in Liverpool, and said that for many years it was looked upon by the rank and file of nurses themselves as a laudable work, perhaps, but as a branch of nursing only suitable for hospital failures and the half trained. The speaker said that as lately as 1900, when she was in hospital, great surprise and regret were expressed at a clever, fully-certificated nurse deciding to go in for district nursing. It was looked upon as the waste of a good nurse.

Within the last three or four years the position of the district nurse had changed altogether. A great wave of enlightenment had spread over the kingdom in regard to the need of better and healthier conditions in the homes of the poor, and in schools and factories. Preventive work was the great feature of the modern school of hygiene, and it was now being acknowledged, as it had never been acknowledged before, that the district nurse was one of the very best agents that could be found to do this work. In consequence new paths of work were being opened to her every day, and more and more was being expected of her.

Lady Hermione emphasised the necessity for the employment of thoroughly trained nurses in district work, and contended that £30-£35 could not be considered an excessive salary for a highly trained worker, who is doing immense service to the community in the way of preventive work.

The Nurse as a Social Worker.

Miss H. L. Pearse said that the positions open to trained nurses as workers for the good of the community increased constantly, as the effect of systematic training upon character was more fully realised. The nurse who had this training had a peculiar aptitude for social work, and nurses were now being appointed as health visitors, nurses in factories, sanitary inspectors, inspectors under the Infants' Life Protection Act, and last, but not least, as school nurses. Even before the Board of Education decreed that medical inspection of school children was to be carried out, nurses working under Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute had—all honour to it—visited some schools here and there, but there was no attempt to deal with the problem as a whole until the London County Council took the matter up. Since then the number of school nurses had largely increased all over the country.

In the time allotted to the discussion of the papers Mrs. Netterville Barron urged that trained nurses with a knowledge of organisation should be allotted a larger place in the Red Cross movement.

Mme. Thoumaian spoke of the need for trained nursing in Armenia, and Miss Pocock, formerly an Army Sister, spoke of the need for registration of nurses, and her own experience of a nurse who had a four years' certificate, and during the whole of her training had never nursed a woman.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CONSUMPTION.

The National Association for the Prevention of Consumption and other Forms of Tuberculosis is undertaking a new educational campaign. A special appeal committee has been appointed to collect funds for the campaign, which is to be carried out by means of travelling tuberculosis exhibitions, caravans with lantern slides, popular lectures, an information bureau for the Press and public, and the distribution of leaflets.

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