

Nursing Echoes.

The Fourth Annual Nursing and Midwifery Conference and Exhibition will open at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Vincent Square, S.W., on Tuesday, April 4th, and a visit to the various trade stalls will well repay nurses and midwives who wish to keep up to date in what is being put upon the market in aid of improved sanitary conditions for the people. At Stall 11b this Journal and other professional literature will be found on sale, including the Bill for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, the Pageant Programme and Book of the Words.

Conjointly with the Exhibition an interesting Conference will be held in the London County Council Technical Institute, Westminster, at which medical practitioners only will preside. Either trained nurses and midwives ought to conduct the Conference from the chair, or the addition of the word "Medical" should be made to the description of the Conference.

One of the most important papers will be that by Mrs. Lawson, President of the National Association of Midwives, on "The Midwives' Act and What it Means to Midwives," which is down for discussion on the afternoon of Thursday, April 6th. We hope full discussion will be permitted this year, as last year the Chairman closed the meeting somewhat summarily, and no discussion could take place on Mrs. Lawson's paper.

Our picture on this page of Miss Beatrice Kent, as Phoebe of Cenchrea, in the Nursing

Pageant, from a photograph by C. Vandyk, 37, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W., is of great interest, as showing the position held by women in the early Church. In "A History of Nursing" we read that "The chronicles of Christian nursing begin with the diaconate, which included men and women having similar functions, the chief of which was the care of the poor and the sick. From the earliest apostolic times deaconesses were placed on a

level with the deacons, and the title 'diakonus,' as used by St. Paul in speaking of Phoebe of Cenchrea, was applied equally to men and women. Phoebe (A.D. 60), the friend of St. Paul, who enjoys the distinction of having been the first deaconess, is believed to have had social standing and wealth.

. . . The deaconess, ranking with the clergy, was ordained by the bishop, with the consent of the congregation, and the laying on of hands. Her duties, like those of the deacon, were both secular and clerical. She was the first parish worker, friendly visitor, and district nurse. . . Her religious duties were very important, and of greater extent than those of her sister, the modern Protestant deaconess. She taught, catechised, and brought the women converts to baptism, or baptised them herself; stood at the women's

door in the churches and showed them to their places; brought them to the Lord's Supper, and assisted at the altar during the Sacrament." Tucker and Malleon, who give more explicit details than many writers, say:—"The terms used for the ordering of men and women clergy were always identical. Both were ordained by the imposition of hands. The



Miss BEATRICE KENT,
Phoebe of Cenchrea.

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