

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,276

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1912.

Vol. XLIX.

EDITORIAL.

THE NURSE AS A PIONEER.

One of the facts which are being most plainly demonstrated in the nursing world is that the entrance of the trained nurse into social service imposes on her the obligation to be conversant with many matters formerly considered outside her province. Indeed, it is evident that, if she is to meet the demands upon her, the establishment of a special course of training similar to that now available for nurses at Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, in connection with the Department of Nursing and Health, is urgently necessary in this country.

At the recent International Congress of Nurses at Cologne, one speaker after another emphasized the point that nurses needed a great deal more than a thorough knowledge of their own professional work if they were to be effective social workers; indeed Fräulein Schubert claimed that, in order really to help, nurses should know "everything," and that it was of vital importance that they should be women of education and refinement. She further pointed out that in pioneer work, such as that in the care and management of infants, now being undertaken through various agencies, it was often necessary, in order to further the cause, that she should be able to speak well and fluently on the work in hand.

This is a side of social service from which the trained nurse often shrinks. She knows her own work; she is able to deal with patients, and to cope with any emergencies which may arise from day to day, but she thinks it asking just a little too much that she should be expected to give addresses in relation to that work. She considers that her gifts lie in other directions, and that

public speaking should not be demanded of her.

We fully admit that it is asking a great deal of nurses, but the public, by their services in the past, has come to believe that nurses will rise to the demands of the present and future, and we do not believe that it will be disappointed.

Undoubtedly one reason why nurses feel confidence when at work, and altogether incompetent for public speaking, is that they have been trained for the former and not for the latter. To be an effective speaker some knowledge of the rules governing this art, and of voice production are necessary, as well as practice in addressing an audience, or teaching a class, and nurses who think of specialising in any branch of social service will do well to acquire some elementary knowledge of these subjects. Most Superintendents of district nurses for instance are required from time to time to give public addresses with the double purpose of explaining the work in order to interest the public in it, and of securing financial support. To do this needs no small ability, and the same applies still more forcibly to newer branches which are constantly opening up to the trained nurse, and appealing for her work.

Fräulein Schubert while admitting that "to speak well and fluently on the subject in hand is the most difficult part of the nurse's business," at the same time gives an indication of the motive power which will inspire her—"when her heart is in her calling, her tongue will be eloquent in its service."

Lastly, if the trained nurse renders such great and indispensable services to the State, surely she has a right to expect from it that recognition which will protect her profession from charlatans, and so raise its status and add to its influence by granting legal status to its accredited members.

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