

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRAINED NURSES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

THE DUBLIN CONFERENCE.

JUNE 4th.

AFTERNOON SESSION :

MASSAGE, TRAINING AND EDUCATION.

Mrs. Strong presided at the session on Massage on the afternoon of June 4th, when the first paper was presented by Dr. Barrie Lambert.

THE TRAINING OF THE MASSEUSE.

Discussing the training of the masseuse, Dr. Barrie Lambert said that massage as it had been taught in this country had fallen into great disrepute, and it would be well, now that the whole status of massage was being raised, and it was being developed into a dignified legitimate profession if some other name could be substituted for that of masseuse, but no satisfactory new name had, so far, suggested itself. In Sweden the term gymnast was used, or educational and medical gymnast, to denote the two branches, but although the term medical gymnast was certainly a good one, it was not sufficiently understood by the public, to whom the word gymnast implied an acrobat.

The exercises and gymnastics now described as Swedish did not originate in Sweden, but it was due to the genius of Ling that they were organised on a scientific basis. Massage was said to be as old as mankind. Homer in the *Odyssey* 1000 B.C., told how beautiful women anointed and rubbed the war heroes.

In Athens and Sparta 600 B.C. the gymnasium was a State institution, and gymnastics were divided into athletic, military, and medical, and the writings of Herodotus, Plato, Hypocrates, and Pliny abounded with references to rubbing; indeed, Hypocrates, 400 B.C., laid down an axiom in regard to massage which showed how well the art of massage was understood in those days. He said, "Rubbing can bind a joint that is too loose, and loosen a joint that is too rigid," and again "rubbing can bind and loosen, can make flesh, and cause parts to waste. Hard rubbing binds, soft rubbing loosens, much rubbing causes parts to waste, moderate rubbing makes them grow."

Ling in 1813 founded the Central Institute, Stockholm, and a two years' training was instituted, which included educational and medical gymnastics, and well equipped gymnasts went forth from the Institute to work in all parts of the world.

How it happened after this that the idea should have taken root in England that three to six weeks' training was amply sufficient was difficult to say, but such was the case, and two things followed. A generation of untrained and incompetent workers went forth, and either

massage fell into disrepute and the medical profession, seeing no results, refused to utilise it, or those doctors who were more enlightened insisted on only employing Swedes, knowing that they were sufficiently trained, and it was only some ten years ago that we awoke to the fact that there was a new, interesting, and well-paid profession carried on in our country which was almost entirely in the hands of foreigners.

The Incorporated Society of Trained Masseuses made the first effort to put things on to a better footing. They insisted on a three-months' training, which was considered ample in those days, made strict enquiries into the social status and respectability of their members, which by this time had, unfortunately, become very necessary, and laid down three excellent rules—not to work without a doctor, not to sell drugs, not to treat men except under exceptional circumstances.

This three months' training had never been increased, although the standard of work required by the I.S.T.M. was practically a six months one, and this for massage only.

Dr. Barrie Lambert contended that massage alone was not sufficient, and that massage and gymnastics should always go together. The use of massage only limited the cases suitable for treatment. For instance, in cases of heart disease, more value was got in many cases from properly modified exercises than from massage, and curvature cases, and many others benefited similarly by exercises.

One scholastic year, *i.e.*, nine months, should be given to massage and medical gymnastics, and should include, in addition to these subjects, anatomy, physiology, the theory of disease, the treatment of fractures, and hospital work. The speaker thought it very necessary that the students should practise first on one another, and afterwards on hospital patients, and if possible the trainer should herself feel what the student's touch was like by allowing herself to be massaged.

She considered the treatment of patients essential, no amount of make believe could ever take its place. You might, in imagination, treat a fracture on the first day a hundred times over and feel very competent, but it was very different when, for the first time, you handled the actual fracture and dealt with a wincing patient.

Dr. Barrie Lambert deprecated the practice of endeavouring to treat too many patients—as many as fifteen from 2 to 5 p.m.—prevailing in some hospitals. However keen the masseuse, it was physically impossible, the whole thing degenerated into a farce, and the students got into thoroughly bad habits of work.

Electrical training and educational gymnastics were very important to a thoroughly equipped masseuse, but it was impossible to crowd them into a year's massage training. Electrical training should include radiant heat and hot air baths, Faradism, galvanism, Naubeim baths, and cataphoresis; they were so often asked for, and so much help to certain cases, that a qualified masseuse should certainly take out a course. In

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