

ture by touch. Not only had the great increase in exact knowledge of physical and biological laws acquired during the past quarter of a century profoundly affected the nurses' outlook and methods, but the marked specialization within the medical profession had led to a corresponding specialization among nurses, and a more and more elaborate preliminary training. The general nurse of bygone days became in the first place divided into three types—the medical, surgical, and midwifery nurse, the last-named being originally drawn mainly from the humbler classes, and that was very much the state of affairs twenty-three years ago when the speaker graduated. The process of partition had now advanced very much further, so that we had not only the three groups already named, but smaller sub-divisions of those, devoting themselves to mental nursing, fever work, electrical treatment, massage, dentistry, and so on. The agenda, indeed, for the meetings of the Conference was a sufficiently striking indication of this, and it was perhaps a question whether this specialization had not been carried far enough, as Mr. Dooley asserted was the case in practical medicine. It had, however, to be admitted that this introduction of the scientific spirit had broadened the view, improved the method, and added greater interest to nursing.

Dr. Douglas then proceeded to deal in greater detail with some matters connected with practical nursing, where clearer knowledge based upon scientific research had led to alteration in outlook and procedure. Among the topics touched upon were fresh air, and the temperature and cubic space of wards; the influence of sunshine in convalescent, infectious, and mental cases; rest, nutrition, and the nature of fatigue; the effects of exercise and massage, and the influence of baths. The great strides made by modern bacteriology had had a marked influence on practical nursing, and had taught us all many lessons. We knew now that the causal agency in a very large number of ailments was a living germ, capable of growth, of spread, and of destruction, and studies in this field had given us light on many points. We knew now that fresh external air contained few micro-organisms, while dust harboured many, sinking as they did by gravitation, so that moist removal of dust was very desirable. We had now precise information regarding the dissemination of germs from the throat and mouth of infected persons when in the act of laughing and speaking, so that influenza, pneumonia, diphtheria, pneumonic plague, and especially phthisis, could be spread by this, the moist spray method. The careful nurse would

therefore always see that the consumptive or influenzal patient had a bed to himself, and that visitors did not sit too near. The conveyance of disease by biting insects, or on the feet or bodies of non-biting insects, was now a proved fact, and the district nurse in inculcating personal cleanliness was also safeguarding the patient's and the public's health. The knowledge, moreover, that in infective illnesses the body tended to produce its own antidotes, largely irrespective of drugs, were it but given time, had greatly influenced the treatment of enteric fever and of pneumonia (that illness which was now causing 10 per cent. of the deaths in our large towns), so that the aim of the physician was to keep the patient alive till the natural cure resulted, and was, he recognised, most likely to be brought to fruition by good nursing.

In conclusion, the speaker touched on the useful help given by the nurse in the carrying out of many of the more elaborate clinical methods on which modern diagnosis was based. Much more might be said on many of these points, but enough had been touched on to indicate how greatly the nurse's work at the present day had been influenced by modern science.

#### THE CONFERENCE.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH.

Miss E. S. Haldane, LL.D., presided over the Conference on Monday afternoon when there were present on the platform, in addition to the speakers, Miss A. W. Gill, Lady Superintendent, Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh; Miss Melrose, Royal Infirmary, Glasgow; Miss Gregory Smith, Western Infirmary, Glasgow, and Miss Chalmers, Eye Infirmary, Glasgow.

In the course of her opening address, Miss Haldane said that there were various associations of nurses in Scotland doing very good work, and it was well that they should have the opportunity of meeting together to discuss things. She emphasized the fact that it was only comparatively lately that nursing had become a real profession. For many years it had been an occupation for women. Immense changes had taken place which began when Miss Nightingale inaugurated the first training school for nurses.

Nursing had developed tremendously on the scientific side, and their technical skill was now only acquired by years of work. The changes began with the introduction of antiseptic treatment in surgery, and on the medical side also it was soon realized that treatment was more important than drugs. Therefore nurses must be with the sick night and day, and a completely new conception of things in regard to the treatment of disease was brought about. Not only must the nurse's hands be trained to be skilful but her brain must be trained to think, she must nurse the patient intelligently and be able to give

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