

lacking in nurse-training, in which their Fund could enable them once more to lead the way.

It is from the ranks of trained nurses that must be drawn those who are called to fill the higher posts in the profession, matrons, superintendents, inspectors, and the like, and, while the demand for these grows ever with the growth of the movement, it becomes increasingly difficult to find a due supply of fit and proper persons to fill such posts. Many women to-day are admirable nurses, but their training has not reached beyond nursing; for filling the higher posts a wider knowledge of administration and social work is needed, which the existing training schools do not give. Nor are they to be blamed for the omission, so multifarious have the items become which now go to the training of a nurse, that they have no time for it.

It is this further and fuller training that the Nightingale Council now propose to offer in the form of scholarships, to be called Nightingale scholarships. The scheme is not yet fully matured, but its outline is briefly this, the Council offer every year a limited number of scholarships to nurses who have obtained a certificate after three years' training in some recognised school. These scholarships will entitle the holders to a year's training at the Household and Social Science Department of King's College for Women in the University of London. This department, which will be carried on in new buildings now in course of erection on Campden Hill, has specially applied itself to the teaching required. Its specially fitted laboratories are in close proximity to the experimental kitchen and laundry, which form a portion of the Hostel where the practical arts are taught.

The College has met the Council in every way in the preparation of a suitable course, so conceived as to embrace both theory and practice. Every endeavour will be made to keep in view the object of the course, namely, to equip trained nurses to undertake the responsible positions they are likely to be called on to fill. The subjects chosen will, to this end, be dealt with largely from the practical point of view; and, as experience adds to knowledge, this, the first scheme, will no doubt be modified later, both by omission and addition. It is also intended to ensure the elasticity of the scheme by introducing the principle of alternative subjects, so that a scholar shall be able to select such courses as shall seem most likely to help in the ambitions she may have placed before herself.

The value of the scholarships will be adjusted to meet the tuition fees, to provide maintenance during the year, and to compensate in some degree for the salary the year's training will oblige the scholar to forego. The new buildings of the College include a Hostel in which scholars would be able to reside should they so wish.

The scheme is experimental, and its continuance must depend upon its success. If, as the Council believes, the principle be a wise one, its application can be varied with the years, until an ideal be reached.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRAINED NURSES.

THE BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE.

(Concluded from page 575, Vol LII.)

AFTERNOON SESSION.

JUNE 11TH.

Miss Hannath, Matron of the Wolverhampton and Staffordshire General Hospital, and President of the Midland Association of Matrons and Lady Superintendents, presided at the Afternoon Session on June 11th, and spoke of the increasing interest taken by nurses trained in general hospitals in asylum work. When a Nurses' Registration Act was passed, and a system of reciprocity could be adopted under State Authority, it would be a great step forwards.

THE VALUE OF TRAINING IN THE NURSING OF MENTAL DISORDERS.

Dr. Bedford Pierce, Medical Superintendent at the Retreat, York, said that the improvement in the status of the nurse employed in our hospitals for the insane might be said to date from 1890, when the Medico-Psychological Association instituted a prescribed course of training and organised the examination for proficiency in mental nursing. This examination gradually became an important factor in the training of nurses. From the first the written part of the examination was conducted simultaneously in all parts of Great Britain and Ireland, and papers were set by the examiners appointed by the Association. The oral part was conducted by the local Medical Superintendents assisted by Assessors.

Since then the period of training had extended from two to three years; the number of candidates had steadily increased as the value of the certificate became recognised, and at the last preliminary examination more than 1,000 nurses, male and female, presented themselves. Five years before the examination was instituted the first edition of the "Handbook for Attendants for the Insane" was published by the Association.

The speaker said that his interest in the subject was awakened as soon as he left a large London hospital in 1891 to study the practice of psychiatry in various institutions in England and Scotland.

At that time the contrast between the hospital and the asylum nurse was most striking. In many of the institutions for the insane the nurses were called female attendants; they had no uniform. They were employed first in the capacity of wardmaids and developed into attendants if they were found suitable. There was no training, no lectures, and no incentive whatever to take an intelligent interest in their patients' maladies.

He was not suggesting that the patients were neglected in those days, or treated harshly or unkindly. That was not the case. Kindness of heart, sympathy, tact and many other essential qualities of character were found in all classes of life, but coming straight from a hospital, where

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