

THE CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF TRAINED NURSES.

The Conference convened by the National Union of Trained Nurses was opened at the Drill Hall, College of Ambulance, 3, Vere Street, London, W., by the President of the Union, Miss M. Heather-Bigg, R.R.C., on Friday afternoon, the 16th inst. There was an excellent attendance of members and others.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

Miss Heather-Bigg expressed her pleasure in welcoming all overseas visitors, and said that she did so all the more heartily because she believed she was not only welcoming fellow-nurses, but, possibly, future pioneers. She could not help hoping that, thanks to their presence, similar organisations to the N.U.T.N. might one day flourish in all parts of the Empire, as well as in all parts of the United States of America. When that happened they would have promoted by co-operation the effectiveness of the nursing profession and the lasting good of the Empire.

Miss Heather-Bigg then recalled the beginning of the Union, and said that seventeen years ago the Hon. Secretary, Miss Eden, gathered round her in her home in Taunton a number of ladies with high ideals of nursing. From this small beginning sprang the present Union of Trained Nurses with its membership of over 2,000, and its branches in most of England's big centres.

This rapid development was owing to Miss Eden's strong personality, to her endless energy, and, though she would not like it said, to her generous liberality. The debt of the Union to Miss Eden was great, and she knew the members would wish her to take the opportunity of recording their gratitude. But they must do more than express their gratitude, they must prove it. There was but one real way to do this, to carry on and develop the Union. The membership was open to all nurses from any training school, and they must increase this membership. By joining the Union they were helping it financially to do more for the members, and were increasing its power of influencing public opinion inside and outside of Parliament on matters concerning our profession. In short, they were making nurses a force to be reckoned with when outsiders wished to interfere with conditions of training and employment, or to put the mere amateur nurse on a level with the trained one.

The President then said that Colonel Mayo Robson needed no introduction, as they all knew the magnificent work he had done in Egypt and elsewhere. It was a proud day for the Union when it was addressed by a former Hunterian Professor, and Vice-President of the Royal College of Surgeons.

She then called on Colonel Mayo Robson to address the Conference on "Some Surgical Developments during the War."

SOME SURGICAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE WAR.

Colonel A. W. Mayo Robson, A.M.S., C.V.O., C.B., F.R.C.S., has had a varied experience in many branches of the Medical Services of the British and French Armies, including that of Consulting Surgeon to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, during which time he saw active service in Egypt, in the Greek Islands, at the Dardanelles, and in Egypt during the Sennussi campaign. He was in Rheims during the bombardment, in Verdun during the December fighting in 1916, and in the Argonne both in 1915 and 1916. Out of the fund of knowledge thus acquired he selected as the subject of a paper of extreme interest, which we hope later to publish at greater length, "The various forms of Wound Treatment that have been employed at the Front, and in the Base Hospitals," his reason being that without a knowledge of the why and wherefore of the various methods the nurse's work in this branch is apt to degenerate into mere mechanical work, whereas it is really one of the most interesting studies for both Surgeons and nurses.

RECENT ADVANCES.

Before passing on to Wound Treatment, Colonel Mayo Robson mentioned briefly some of the more recent advances which have taken place in preventive treatment, pre-eminent amongst them being the anti-typhoid injections which have almost altogether prevented what in other wars has led to a greater loss of life than wounds, and the injections of anti-tetanic serum which have been given to all wounded patients, and which have reduced to a great extent another scourge of the battle-field—tetanus.

The treatment of nerve injuries by the suture of divided nerves, or by the grafting of new nerves, and the possibilities thus indicated of the treatment of injuries of the spine so as to bring about relief in some cases of hitherto hopeless paralysis; tendon grafting, bone grafting, the wiring and plating of fractures, plastic surgery of the face, of the nose and ears, the formation of new members, such as the creation of a new thumb from a finger of the opposite hand, a new method of draining the knee joint, the treatment of burns by Ambrine, of trench feet, chilblains, and frost-bites by Oxydol ointment, and by Ambrine, and other surgical improvements were touched upon.

WOUND TREATMENT.

The speaker explained that the reason why the experience gained in civil practice only holds good to a limited extent in relation to war wounds is because, with the exception of some bullet wounds, all are not only septic, but virulently septic, owing to the germ-saturated soil of the highly cultivated lands of France and Belgium, which contaminates the skin and clothing, as well as the fragments of shell and other foreign bodies driven into the tissues.

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