

# Royal British Nurses' Association.

(Incorporated by



Royal Charter.)

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

## THE CONFERENCE.

(Concluded from page 308.)

### SOME PHASES OF MODERN NURSING.

The second part of the Afternoon Session at the Conference convened by the Royal British Nurses' Association at 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, 1, on November 7th, dealt with "Some Phases of Modern Nursing."

#### MODERN NURSING AS IT AFFECTS DISTRICT NURSES' TRAINING.

MISS MARSTERS, Superintendent of the Paddington and District Nursing Association, who presented the first paper, said that in looking back on twenty-two years of district nursing in London one must realize the enormous change in the condition of the people among whom the district nurse works.

Twenty years ago nursing amongst the poor was indeed slum work, and very strenuous it was; nothing to make use of in the homes, and it was a frequent occurrence to have no towel, soap, or basin for washing or dressing purposes; the nurse had to improvise in nearly every case she attended.

If the housing were bad now (which it was in many places), what was it then? Underground cellars, and back to back houses, houses in back yards to which the only entrance was through another house, abounded.

Thanks to the sanitary authorities many of these evils had been done away with, and with them many of the diseases the district nurses were constantly asked to attend—typhoid, diphtheria, &c. There was not hospital accommodation for all these, and many were nursed in their own homes.

A number of serious cases were still nursed on the district, but the character of the work, and the class of patient in large towns was changing. The work of district nurses to a great extent was becoming preventive. The patients were much better off, and it was seldom that they could not procure what was required in the way of dressings, &c., so that it was comparatively easy for an operation to be performed at home.

Amongst the branches of work undertaken by district nurses were nursing for the Public Health authorities of such diseases as measles, whooping-cough, ophthalmia neonatorum, tuberculosis, and she hoped soon the nursing of maternity cases.

Again, there were the school work, and minor ailment centres for school children, infant welfare work, ante-natal clinics, dispensaries for the prevention of consumption and for venereal disease, &c. This was all a part of modern nursing, and for the fully trained nurse to do this work well she must receive instruction during her training in these varied branches of work; also a course of lectures in sociology.

To nurse the poor successfully in their own homes a nurse must understand their ways and the available means of helping them.

The Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute gave instruction in the above subjects to nurses taking up district work, and, as we progressed in preventive nursing, fully trained nurses would specialize in these subjects.

It was not now sufficient when a nurse attended a member of a family for her to simply nurse the patient; she must also observe the manner in which (if there were one) the baby was fed, washed, and clothed, where it slept, whether it attended a welfare centre, the state of the mother's health and teeth, and her ante-natal symptoms, and in the event of there being children under school age, whether they were attending a welfare clinic.

Although there was no glamour about district nursing, and no honours given, it was worth a great deal more to hear a poor mother say, as was often said to her: "Matron, I do not know what I should have done without nurse. She saved baby's life. I shall never forget her."

#### THE PLACE OF THE TRAINED NURSE IN PREVENTIVE WORK.

MISS K. ATHERTON, Medallist of the Royal Sanitary Institute and Educational Organizer of the Hampstead Council of Social Welfare, spoke of the work of the trained nurse in infant welfare centres, and said that the underlying principle of all work of this kind was to get the mothers to bring their children regularly to the centre while they were well. Then the onset of various diseases, such as malnutrition, anæmia, spinal curvature, rheumatism, strained heart, or nervous system could be early detected by the medical officers, and the mother could be gradually educated and brought to the realization that all her children could not be treated alike, but must be studied individually.

Everyone, said Miss Atherton, was talking about infant welfare centres just now. They were the present fashion, for it was realized that the pre-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)