

superficial impressions that have floated through it and absorbed its energies to little or no purpose. Try to make the mind concentrate for, say, twenty minutes, to think on one single subject to the exclusion of all others, and you will find how difficult this is. In the early days of the world's history seers and sages realised that they must master that organ, the brain, and we find that in most of what we might call the schools of theology, philosophy, and in the so-called mystery schools of those olden days certain definite times were set aside each day for exercises in concentration and meditation. In modern days such exercises would be regarded as a sad waste of time, but it is undoubted that they must have tended not only to increase mental capacity, but also that they gave a certain anchorage to the mind which led to a finer mental balance, a saner and broader outlook, and a greater control over the emotions, whilst also preventing the formation of such pernicious habits as worrying, scandalmongering, and unhealthy, neurotic introspection."

CHEERY OPTIMISM.

The lecturer next referred to the importance of every nurse having some hobby apart from her work, and to the effect of this as regards mental balance and the rest it gave to centres overstrained by the ordinary round of work. Continuing, she said: "Another very important point in regard to the hygiene of the mind is the cultivation of a cheery optimism and an ability to put one's whole self into every undertaking. I can remember once, while sitting by a window in St. Andrews, the great golfing centre in Scotland, I saw a white-haired, buoyant old gentleman approaching, carrying his clubs. His face was simply aglow with satisfaction, and one could not but wonder whether he had got news that he had received the O.B.E., been raised to the peerage, or won a bet on the Derby. He solved the riddle himself, for, as he passed by the window, I heard him say to his companion, 'I'm so glad I won that last hole.' All this happiness because he had 'won a hole,' and yet I could not help thinking that he approached with the same enthusiasm everything else in life—his business, his newspaper, and, maybe, his lunch. He was so perfectly happy, and yet it may have been that he had lost all the other holes; it did not matter—he had won 'that last.' Many of us would do well to imitate his lighthearted enjoyment in what we have achieved, instead of poisoning ourselves, both mentally and physically, by worrying over the holes we have lost, though we may not quite attain to the heights of optimism that characterised a certain dear old lady of some eighty summers who had only two teeth left, but was so glad they were opposite."

DISCUSSION.

In a lengthy discussion which followed, Miss Beatrice Kent said that it was desirable that a certain amount of mental nursing should enter into every nurse's training. Miss Kent also referred to the need for reformation in Mental Hospitals. Miss Macdonald, a member of the audience, said that

this did not refer to the Scottish Mental Hospitals, and Miss Kent agreed. Mrs. Furley Smith also said that in many such hospitals, particularly private ones, there was urgent need of reform, but she could not agree that all English mental hospitals were badly managed. She had been interested in a case treated in two mental hospitals. In the first she thought the conditions very bad, but the management of the second—Banstead Mental Hospital—left nothing to be desired. No words could describe the courtesy, kindness, and consideration which she had seen shown to the patients there. Miss Warriner spoke on the benefits arising from the practice of concentration and silence, Mrs. Campbell Thomson of the great difficulty which private nurses have in cultivating any hobbies owing to their conditions of work.

In replying to a vote of thanks, moved by Mrs. Earp, Miss Macdonald said that pressure of work had not permitted her to deal at all exhaustively with her subject, but if she could feel that she had made it to some extent relevant to conditions of life at the present time, and given food for thought or any pleasure whatever that afternoon, she would at least close another of these strenuous weeks in the happy consciousness of having won its last hole.

THE PAGEANT OF THE EVOLUTION OF TRAINED NURSING.

The Secretary will be glad to hear from Members of the Corporation who will interest their friends in the Pageant of the Evolution of Trained Nursing, which is to take place on April 15th. There are many ways in which the nurses can help towards making it a great success, and those who are prepared to do so should communicate with us without delay. Each member might sell at least one guinea ticket, so as to cover the expenses.

We advise all nurses who can to be present at the Pageant themselves, to witness an unfolding in stately procession of the long history of their profession. The symbolism of those attributes which have caused it to be regarded as perhaps the highest vocation for women will form a very beautiful feature of the Pageant, while in a later section the costumes of knights and ladies of the Middle Ages offer ample opportunity for a very artistic rendering of the history of nursing as it existed in mediæval days. Not less varied, and probably not less picturesque, will be the section relating to modern nursing from the days of the immortal Sairey down to the present time.

ROYAL RED CROSS AWARD.

We congratulate Miss Annice Gray upon having received the Royal Red Cross. She was trained at the Royal Infirmary, Dundee, and before the commencement of war was a Member of the Staff of the Society of Chartered Nurses. She did splendid work later in military hospitals, both in England and abroad, and has now been appointed one of the School Nurses under the London County Council.

ISABEL MACDONALD,

Secretary to the Corporation.

10, Orchard Street, London, W.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)