

main, as heretofore, a mob of unrecognised workers, without status, privileges, or power.

We nurses of the past and present generations owe it as a duty to our colleagues of the future to weld ourselves together *en masse* as the solid foundation on which the splendid edifice of the Profession of Nursing shall arise.

Had not the work of the explorers and pioneers for this great nursing reform been persistently opposed, the organisation which we are attempting to-day would have been effected a quarter of a century ago.

THE REALISATION OF OUR ASPIRATIONS.

But, unlike many other pioneers, we have lived to see the realisation of our aspirations, and State Registration of Nurses by Act of Parliament an accomplished fact. Moreover, so much selfless devotion has been expended in the past, in securing the Nursing Acts, that we feel sure it will be forthcoming in the future to make them effective instruments in health reform, which has always been the aspiration of those who promoted the registration movement.

It is therefore with confidence that we ask every well-trained nurse to apply to the General Nursing Council for Registration when it announces that it is ready to receive applications, and thus share in the privilege of founding the great Profession of Nursing.

MEDICAL MATTERS. THE NATION'S TEETH.

At the recent Conference on the Nation's Teeth, held at the Albert Hall, Manchester, convened by the Food Education Society, Danes Inn House, 265, Strand, W.C. 2, many interesting and important papers were presented.

THE EXTENT AND CONSEQUENCES OF DENTAL DISEASE.

Dr. Harry Campbell made a serious and startling indictment which no one disproved:

We have the worst teeth of any nation. The state of our teeth beggars description. It is a national disgrace which should excite a feeling of shame and humiliation.

Diseases of the teeth include: 1. Irregularities. 2. Loss from extraction and shedding. 3. Decay. 4. Disease at the fang-tips. 5. Pyorrhœa, or socket disease.

Regarding the extent of these among the British, dental irregularities are practically universal among us. Some hundred million teeth have been extracted. About the same number have been spontaneously shed. The decayed teeth number some two hundred million; there are about the same number of pyorrhœa sockets; finally there are some twenty million

diseased fang-tips. *At least nine-tenths of this disease is preventable.*

The consequence of dental diseases are:— (1) Malodorous breath. (2) Unsightliness (from irregularities, decay, long teeth). (3) Pain (toothache, pain inflicted by dentist, fear of dentist). (4) Reflex disturbances. (5) Defective mastication (causing indigestion). (6) Secondary local disease (abscess and cancer). (7) Blood poisoning (arthritis, neuritis). (8) Economic loss (loss of time; need of supplying army of dental surgeons).

THE CAUSE AND PREVENTION OF DENTAL CARIES.

Dr. J. Sim Wallace, D.Sc., stated that the cause of Dental Caries is the undue lodgment of certain carbohydrate foods generally in the crevices of σ between the teeth, when such food, or its situation, prevents the saliva washing through the fermenting mass or neutralizing the acid formed by micro-organisms.

Dental Caries can only be prevented by physiological means. These are—

(1) Mechanical (the motions of the jaws, tongue, lips and cheek), and the action of foods with certain physical qualities—*e.g.*, fibrillar or spongy foods.

(2) Chémico-physiological, resulting from the activity of the glands of oral hygiene (mucus and saliva).

When the physiological activity of the muscles of mastication, tongue, &c., and the physiological activity of the glands of oral hygiene are not interfered with or stultified by unphysiological foods, especially at the end of or between meals, dental caries does not occur.

THE EFFECT OF CERTAIN DIETETIC FACTORS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEETH AND JAWS.

Mrs. May Mellanby declared that few will deny that changes in the diet are largely responsible for the appalling condition of the teeth of civilised man to-day. The question, however, that still remains to a great extent unanswered is, "What are the dietetic factors, the presence of which are responsible for the poor structure of the teeth of civilised man and for their liability to decay?"

In respect of the dental apparatus the diet must be considered from two aspects: (1) The part played by foodstuffs while still in the mouth: (2) The part played by these substances after absorption into the general circulation. The second of these aspects seems to be the more fundamental. That the first is also of importance cannot be denied, but she doubts whether this is so great as some think.

Mrs. Mellanby is of opinion that some substance, known as vitamins or accessory food factors, is of primary importance in the normal development and spacing of the teeth.

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