

THE NURSING AND MIDWIFERY EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE.

THE EXHIBITION.

The Nursing and Midwifery Exhibition at the Royal Horticultural Hall last week, which closed on Friday, May 20th, had magnificent weather, which added much to the pleasure and convenience of those attending it.

Before we leave the subject of the Exhibition we must put on record our great indebtedness to Councillor Beatrice Kent, not only for taking charge of the Stand of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, but for the illuminating way in which she attracted the attention of passing nurses to the ideals for which the JOURNAL stands, and its unique place in the national Press. It was an object lesson of great value to listen to and observe her methods, and we hope that some of those at least who listened to her will profit by the instruction which she gave so lucidly and patiently.

It is of interest to learn from Miss Kent that the two people who showed the greatest interest in the four volumes of "A History of Nursing," by Miss Dock and Miss Nutting, were a Japanese lady and an Italian nurse, who seemed quite absorbed in them and went away determined to secure them.

THE CONFERENCE.

The first Session of the Conference which was held in connection with the Exhibition at the Horticultural Hall, Vincent Square, on May 18th, was presided over by Miss E. C. Barton (Matron, Chelsea Infirmary).

Major Simonds, M.A., Barrister-at-Law, and Secretary of the Poor Law Officers' Association, dealt exhaustively with the subject of Superannuation under the Poor Law. He explained that there had been many Acts of Parliament providing for a scheme of Superannuation for Poor Law Officers, the date of the earliest being 1864. In the year 1897 the Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Amendment Act was passed; in this nurses in the Service were included. The speaker deplored the provision which allows them to contract out if they wish; he emphasised strongly the great benefits of the Superannuation scheme to all concerned. Mr. A. Stoughton Harris, M.A., F.L.A., dealt with pensions for Hospital nurses other than Poor Law Nurses. Pensions (he said) deal with something in the future, and it was difficult to get young nurses to take an interest in anything that will only benefit them about 30 years hence. It was desirable that every Hospital should have its own pension scheme, but the question was obviously a difficult one. Speaking of the methods upon which a pension scheme might be based, Mr. Harris mentioned two, namely, (1) a scheme basing the pension upon the salary received; (2) the nurse to pay so much in order to receive a given sum at a given age. In referring to the National Pension Fund for Nurses, he spoke in

praise of its administration, adding that owing to the great depreciation from which it suffered during the war, it is not as well off as it expected to be.

NURSES' SALARIES.

"We are only just beginning to have a proper standard of living for professional women," remarked Miss Ruth Young (Secretary of the Headmistresses Association), in her very interesting and original speech on "Nurses' Salaries from the Professional Woman's Point of View." She laid down a principle when she added:—"If you raise the standard of living for one profession, you raise it for those beneath it." She placed the professions of Nursing and Teaching on the same level, in relation to their service to the community—care of the body and of the mind being of supreme importance—and those who provide for these necessities should be properly remunerated. The School Teachers' Superannuation scheme provides for a pension of £160. Miss Young ridiculed the idea of a totally inadequate pension for Nurses, alluded to by a former speaker. "If pensions are due to those who have to do with the mind, surely they are due to those who have to do with the body!" she declared, and women ought to have enough to live upon and to save for old age.

HEALTH WORK.

Miss Grace Vaughan presided at the next session, when Miss Halford, Secretary of the National League for Health, Maternity and Child Welfare, spoke on "Health Work," and Miss Edith May, late Health Visitor, Margate, on "Little Rifts in District Work."

MIDWIFERY AND COMMON SENSE.

At the Evening Session Miss Tunbridge, Matron of the General Lying-In Hospital, York Road, Lambeth, presided, and the session was devoted to midwifery. Dr. Lionel Smith, dealing with "Midwifery and Common Sense," Sister Coni, Labour Ward Sister in the same institution, with "Some Notes on Painless Labour," and Mrs. Marion Cockerell, M.B. B.S., Medical Officer of the South St. Pancras Mothers' Welcome, with the much discussed question of "Infant Feeding."

THE HISTORY OF THE MIDWIFE.

Midwifery was again dealt with in the opening Session of Thursday, May 19th, Mr. A. H. Richardson, F.R.C.S., Assistant Obstetric Physician at the General Lying-In Hospital, giving an interesting "Retrospective Glance into the History of the Midwife." Dr. Wayte, of the same institution, spoke on Ante-Natal Work, and Mrs. Turner, Sister-in-Charge of the Post Certificate School, at Camberwell, under the auspices of the same institution, gave an interesting account of its objects.

At the next Session the chair was taken by Miss Olive Haydon, Superintendent of Paget House, and the first paper (on the Midwives' Institute and its Work) was read by Miss Pearson. Both these ladies are amongst the midwives

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