

the Sick, which is given to thousands of girls and women of all types and descriptions, and its disaster programme, which, unfortunately for the country, is one of enormous proportion. During the Florida disaster, September, 1926, for example, over 400 nurses were used, and in the Mississippi flood, the winter and spring of 1927, have required the services of over 200. The Local Committees on Red Cross Nursing Service, as well as the District and State Associations, actively support the general programme of the American Red Cross. At the time of the Annual Roll Call they not only enrol themselves, but many times are active in soliciting enrolments. They assist the chapters in many ways, in its production programme, at Memorial Day Services, at First Aid Stations and in countless other ways. It must be remembered, however, that in few countries do we find the nurses so well organised, so numerous and so well recognised as in the United States. Canada can point to an equally interesting type of co-operation, although one quite different. So, too, can Denmark, as well as many other countries.

Let us turn for a moment to a younger country—Bulgaria. In this country the only school is that which is connected with the Bulgarian Red Cross Hospital. It has, however, developed under modern and progressive leadership that was the product of a country where nursing occupies a recognised position. Consequently, the graduates from this school have organised an independent nursing association which has been received into the International Council of Nurses. They have their own officers and publish their own magazine. Into this organisation many of the older Red Cross nurses who were graduates from the school before its reorganisation have been admitted. This nursing association stands ready to supplement the work of the National Red Cross and to co-operate with it in every particular. This type of independence on the part of the graduates of a school which is under the auspices of a Red Cross Society, though a part of the educational system of the country, is a new departure. It remains to be seen whether this independent yet co-operative relationship will endure. We believe it will for it is sound. If it does, it should be an example to many other countries in which nursing in its modern conception is struggling for an independent professional existence.

It would appear, therefore, that insuperable barriers do not exist, even in countries slow to adopt a more modern and progressive system of nursing, and that nothing incompatible or insuperable prevails that could hinder the development of the closest possible co-operative relationship between organised nursing on the one hand and Red Cross Societies on the other. Furthermore, that even though the nurse may be a graduate of a Red Cross School, there seems no reason why she should be debarred from an independent professional life. It would, I believe, be most unfortunate for the Red Cross movement, the Nurses' Associations, the individual nurse and the public, if attempts were made to separate the graduates from Red Cross Schools from the graduates of other schools and divert them towards an independent organisation.

It is assumed that nurses, as well as others, are members of their National Red Cross Society. It belongs as much to them as to anyone else. They owe their allegiance to it. The fact that they are members of the nursing profession does not alter this fact; on the contrary it makes their responsibility to it that much greater. The Red Cross emblem stands for service to humanity; that, too, is the guiding principle of the nurse. This being the case there seems then no reason why the great Red Cross and the great army of nurses should not unite in helping to bring to its fullest fruition this great altruistic movement on behalf of mankind.

#### WAYS AND MEANS OF PROMOTING THE POWERS OF OBSERVATION AND SCIENTIFIC REASONING IN OUR STUDENT NURSES.

The subject under discussion at this session, in various aspects, was "Ways and Means of Promoting the Powers of Observation and Scientific Reasoning in our Student Nurses."

##### Should the Nurse take part in the Scientific Work of the Medical Profession?

Professor Clemens Pirquet, Superintendent of the Children's Hospital, University of Vienna, presented a paper on the above subject, which, in his absence, was read by Ober-Schwester Hedwig Birkner. Professor Pirquet said in part:—

Formerly the art of the physician, half handicraft, half secret doctrine, was handed down by word of mouth from master to apprentice. Isolated prominent thinkers amongst the Greeks, the Romans and the Arabs, and the European physicians of the Middle Ages, added new and original ideas, but their discoveries bore rather the stamp of intuition than of experiment. It was as late as the 17th century that medicine began to be regarded as a science in the present meaning of the term, not built upon authority and blind traditions but upon minute observation of nature which every student can repeat in order to convince himself.

In olden times nursing was a part of the art of medicine, and it is only since the days of Miss Nightingale that the two have begun to separate and that nursing has been considered as a special art. That it is necessary for a nurse to have professional preparation is not universally accepted even now. The older generation of doctors is still largely of the opinion that no special knowledge is necessary for a nurse and that good will, physical capacity for work, and common sense are all that should be expected.

We of a younger generation, however, think differently. We do not wish the nurse blindly to follow the doctor's directions, we want her to understand them. We think that she should have a good knowledge of anatomy and physiology, know how illnesses are caused and what effects they have upon the organism; she should be able to judge the effect of the various nursing procedures in order to convince herself of their value or otherwise.

And thus we come to a further scientific advance for the nurse; she should also learn to think independently and form new conceptions. We must not, however, go to extremes and demand independence of thought in every nurse, but should give scope for development to those who show taste and ability in this direction.

I do not consider that the scientific research work of the nurse should take the same form as that required for the doctorate in many countries, namely, the writing of theses. This method of forcing scientific research does not lead to striking results and very much time is wasted in superfluous, valueless, dilettante work. There are many natures that can do excellent imitative work, but are inadequate as soon as they try to produce original ideas. A capacity for original thought is rarer, apparently, in women than in men. The attempt to force nurses into more independent and more scientific activity would probably be still less fruitful than is the demand for dissertations from the doctor.

But those nurses who possess the capacity for scientific work should be encouraged to collect the facts they have observed, to write down and publish their scientific conclusions and also to experiment. In my clinic it is chiefly the food laboratory which has offered opportunities for new ideas to the nurses. To a certain extent every cook is an experimenter; in every dish the mixture of ingredients, the application of heat, the seasoning, are experiments. But only a very few cooks are able to draw general

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