

they would be allowed to complete their training in schools of nursing without further expense. During the war, Mlle. Chaptal says, this plan was followed in a few European countries with excellent results as regards the temporary need of the country, and the benefit resulting to the students themselves.

Sister Bergl of Larsson and others questioned whether any training of only a year's duration could be *basic*, but it must be remembered that in this connection Mlle. Chaptal is speaking only of a temporary device to meet an urgent need, that she does not advocate it as the training of a *nurse*, and that later in her paper she defined such training as "a total of three years' training in the school, combining class work with practical experience."

PUBLIC HEALTH SECTION.

Miss Nance Patrick, Director of the Royal New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children, in rising to open the Session, said that it was with the keenest pleasure and gratification that she saw a crowded audience gathered together to consider the subject which we know

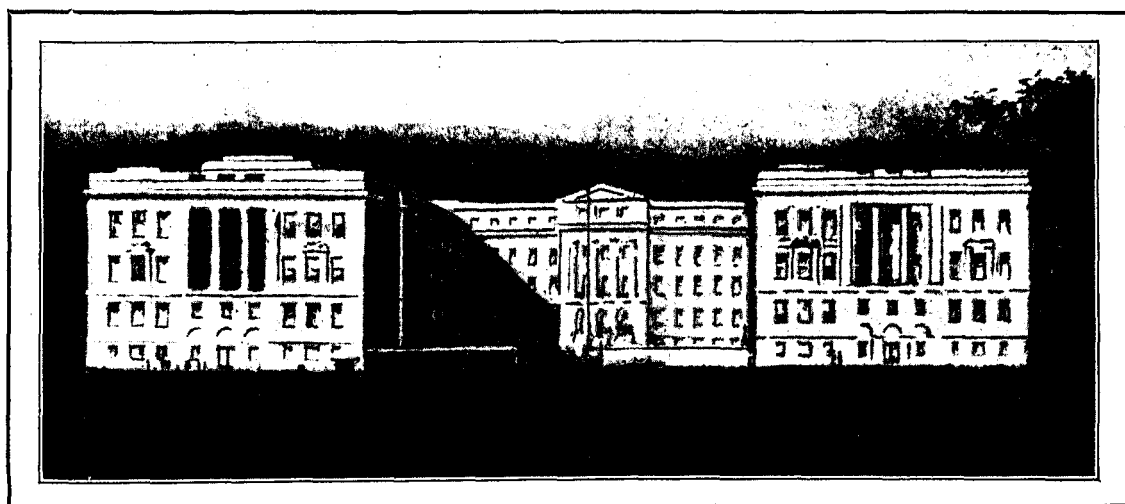
Director of the Dispensaries at Florence, to address the meeting.

Developments in the Public Health Field.

Professor Roatta's paper is one which contains some illuminating suggestions and deserves careful study. He said:—When the International Council of Nurses' did me the honour of inviting me to speak at this Congress, on Public Health Developments, before all things it became necessary for me to find an answer to a question: What unit of measure is at our disposal by which we can judge of the progress of this development.

The unit of measure which at first sight seems the most reliable is that of statistics. Nevertheless statistics with their apparent precision, and on account of this same mathematical precision, are more likely than anything else to lead us to mistaken conclusions.

After enumerating the various diseases concerning which statistics are available in certain particulars, and the reasons why they are not necessarily trustworthy, he says:—But a much more important objection can be made to the consideration of medical statistics alone, in judging Public



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to be one of the fundamental needs for both national and international well-being, namely, Public Health. This section of the Nursing Profession occupying, as it does, a foremost place in the present-day activities of our members, offers a wonderful and ever-growing scope to any well-trained, adaptable nurse, who may decide to join its ranks.

The question of post-graduate training in connection with this work, for economic and other reasons, is still receiving wide consideration, but most countries are agreed that specialised training is absolutely necessary, both in the fundamental matters connected with the preservation of health and the prevention of disease, and also in preparing the student to pass on her knowledge to others in such a manner that it can be put to the greatest possible use. The cost of this post-graduate study, by whom it shall be borne, what steps shall be taken to choose suitable students for such study, etc., etc., is a problem which must be settled by local conditions chiefly, but it is generally agreed that this training and sending out of Health Missioners is of the most vital importance—that both, by the teaching of mothercraft and child welfare, healthy normal children may be brought into the world, and that these children may learn to grow up unassailed by preventable disease.

Miss Patrick then called on Professor G. B. Roatta,

Health development; that is up to now, they may tell us to a certain extent what is the state of disease, but they tell us nothing about the state of health.

A disease—I mean a disease which kills, and statistics deal chiefly with this—when it does not assume the sweeping waves of the great epidemics of the Middle Ages, is socially much less important than those indeterminate conditions which favour the production of individuals physically and mentally deficient. Medical statistics give us no information about such conditions which are not those of illness neither are they those of health. At the most they allow us to form suppositions based on the prevalence of certain groups of diseases of a specially social character, like tuberculosis, syphilis or alcoholism.

Perhaps it is altogether wrong to seek for the explanation of Public Health improvement in diseases and death rate statistics, Hygiene being the Science of Health, and by health I mean the harmonious development of mind and body.

We will therefore leave to one side the statistics of disease, which, at best, can only give us limited and one-sided information, and seek for the answer in the consideration of Public Health itself, how, with what weapons, with what mentality, with what aim, and by what means.

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