

THE SCOTTISH NURSES' CLUB.

Mr. Thomas Stark Brown, D.L., Convener of the Water Committee of the Corporation of Glasgow, delivered a lecture to the Club on December 9th, on "The Romance of the Glasgow Water." He mentioned that the quality of the water from Loch Katrine was so pure that it needed no filtering, that the consumption was over seventy-million gallons per day, or about forty gallons per head of the population, and that, although before the war, the domestic rate was 6d. in the pound, it is now only 5d.; and he emphasised the interesting fact that, while the revenue from the domestic rate was £119,000, £94,000 had to be paid in local rates. He briefly traced the history of the water supply, and paid a tribute to William Harley, who was the first to introduce water to Glasgow by gravitation in the beginning of last century. He explained the opposition that Glasgow always met with in its efforts to increase the supply.

Among the benefits conferred on Glasgow by its fine water supply, it was stated that, since the introduction of Loch Katrine water, there had been no cholera in the city.

Within recent years, the Corporation had purchased the Catchment area, so that when they raised the Loch five feet a few years ago, they had nothing to pay under that head. The total capital cost of the undertaking is now rather under £5,500,000, which is reduced by the sinking fund to less than half that sum—a most satisfactory position.

The Corporation regretted that the beauty of Loch Katrine might have been somewhat affected, but they always did their best to minimise the damage, and hoped in the course of time to make it good. The health of one-fourth of the population is more important than the amenity of a Highland Loch, however classic.

There is no fear that Glasgow will ever run short of water, as the supplies are ample, and sufficient could be got for the needs of Glasgow even although it became as big as London.

The lecture was illustrated by lantern slides.

A PAGE OF NURSING HISTORY.

OPENING OF PRAIN PRELIMINARY TRAINING SCHOOL.

Dundee Royal Infirmary.

On the occasion of the opening of the Prain Preliminary Training School for Nurses, on Tuesday, December 10th, Dundee Royal Infirmary had the honour of again welcoming within its walls Mrs. Strong, who was Matron more than fifty years ago. During her tenure of office from 1874 to 1879, Mrs. Strong initiated the movement for the education of nurses and she now inaugurated its culmination in the setting apart of the House, 5, Dudhope Terrace, for purposes of preliminary instruction.

Mr. Athole Stewart, Chairman, thanked the donor, Mr. James Prain, for gifting the house and providing all necessary equipment. Mr. J. C. Buist, L.L.D., introduced Mrs. Strong, and Mr. Prain in handing over the gold key referred to her as "a noble leader of a very noble profession."

Mrs. Strong replied as follows:—

"It is with very mixed feelings I stand here to-day with the experience of half a century from the time I held office here as Matron. On first receiving Miss Niccol's letter I was elated with pleasure to think that the Infirmary in which I commenced work in a responsible position, had now arrived at a point in which it can claim to be one of the leading schools in Scotland for the study of nursing. Then I thought of those far distant days when both medicine and nursing were emerging from darkness into light. The days of Lister had so far advanced that we were enveloped in carbolic steam as an antiseptic at operations and the dressings that followed, but the day of aseptic work had scarcely dawned.

This Infirmary when I had the honour of being appointed as Matron, was remarkably blessed in having a Medical Superintendent of the most advanced views, so much so that an addition was being built to give fitting accommodation to the nursing staff, some single bedrooms, and some double, a dining room, also a sitting room, a most unusual thing in those days, in fact scarcely thought of, so you see Dundee Royal Infirmary has never lacked enterprise.

Previous to my being appointed Matron at the Dundee Royal Infirmary, I spent 5½ years in connection with the Nightingale School which was established at St. Thomas' Hospital, London, where a custom was introduced, after I had joined the school, of having "Lady Probationers" which induced some women of high position to enter, for which they paid, remaining one year as probationer, and then receiving the higher appointments. A school in the strict sense of the word it was not, no systematic teaching nothing but a stray lecture or two in the course of the year; it may be said it was empirical learning, each one making the best of her opportunities. There was a skeleton in a cupboard in our dormitory, and a few odd books on Anatomy of which some of us availed ourselves. We were very fortunate in having an excellent Resident Medical Officer who took great interest in us, and we were free to ask questions of him, and he of us, and thereby learnt a good deal.

On being appointed Matron to this Infirmary, I had no fixed ideals to aim at. To be kind to the patients, to prevent bedsores, to give some leading points to watch for in regard to symptoms of various deviations from health was about all my stock of knowledge, but I found an able, willing teacher in Dr. Sinclair.

The confidence of ignorance carried me through, and I spent a very happy and instructive time, to myself, in this Hospital, and on being appointed Matron to the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, I found the experience gained here invaluable, but still no thought of systematic instruction for pupil nurses occurred to me, and when some classes were introduced to give a little technical teaching it was weary work for all, no time available, the whole time was required for bedside work, and not sufficient numbers to do that properly.

However, we struggled on till a light seemed to dawn upon me that the whole business was unsatisfactory, and unless some big movement was made I would give it up, which I did, and opened a Home for Private patients in Glasgow, which kept me in touch with some of the medical men of Glasgow.

When the position of Matron was again vacant, and I was asked to send in an application, I was better prepared to carry out the needs, and I was assured that the necessary support would be given. A system for the introduction of a preliminary course of instruction for pupil nurses had been drawn up by some of the Medical Staff of the Infirmary, and the consent of the Managers was easily gained. One of the results of that work is the opening of this School to-day, and for which I think the faithfulness of Miss Niccol to her Alma Mater has much to do. I am quite sure you will find in her an unflinching source of helpfulness in every step of your way. A friend in whom you will find a wise counsellor and guide, and now wishing you all a very great success, I have much pleasure in pronouncing this School open."

The House, situated in its own grounds, is adjacent to the Royal Infirmary. Suitable accommodation is provided for the comfort of the pupils. In addition, the lecture room is well equipped and provision is made for teaching the elements of cooking. The course of instruction extends over two months.

Miss Divens, Sister-Tutor, has been appointed the Resident Sister-in-Charge of this new department.

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