

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

OPENING OF THE WINTER SESSION.

The Opening Meeting of the Winter Session of the British College of Nurses took place at 39, Portland Place, London, W.1, on Thursday, October 16th, when some seventy Fellows, Members and their friends were welcomed by the President and Councillors who were wearing their official Robes.

The Entrance Hall, Council Chamber, Office and Club Room looked particularly beautiful, decorated with autumnal flowers and foliage, and in the Board Room of the Registered Nurses' Association, many interested visitors inspected the History of Nursing collection which Miss A. M. Bushby and the History of Nursing Standing Committee are steadily accumulating and which is growing in value almost daily.

Tea served before the meeting was evidently much appreciated, and under the gay chatter, as friend met friend, there was manifest a feeling of elation that after a period of quiescence we were entering upon an active programme for the forthcoming Winter Session.

Presentation of Certificates and Prize.

At 5.30 those present assembled in the Lecture Hall for the event of the afternoon, the presentation of certificates to those who had successfully passed the examination in Advanced Psychology conducted by Dr. Ronald Forsythe, after a series of lectures given by him earlier in the year, and the prize given by Miss Macaulay for the examinee who headed the list.

The President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, was in the Chair, and in welcoming those present at the beginning of another Session, said that nurses associated with the College were increasingly interested in Psychological Nursing. It was certain that experience in this branch should be included in the curriculum of General Training, though how this was to be done was another matter, but to exclude psychology in the training of nurses was a serious omission.

She then read Dr. Forsythe's report on the Examination and presented certificates to the successful candidates present: Miss E. J. Weaver, F.B.C.N., Miss G. M. Poskitt, M.B.C.N., Miss H. G. Ballard, M.B.C.N., Miss M. Eyre, and Miss N. Williams, M.B.C.N.

Miss E. L. Macaulay, O.B.E., R.R.C., F.B.C.N., then presented the prize she had promised, "Instinct and the Unconscious," by Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, to Miss E. J. Weaver, F.B.C.N., Sister Tutor at the Eastern Hospital, Homerton. In doing so she congratulated her on the knowledge she had displayed, and hoped she would have an opportunity of putting it into practice. She was proud to present the prize to her and hoped she would find the book of interest.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT OF NURSING.

Miss Macaulay then said:—

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Ladies,—I am here this afternoon by kind invitation of the President and Members of this College, of which I myself am a Foundation Fellow. Indeed, I feel honoured by having the distinction of presenting the prize I promised to the candidate who obtained highest marks in the recent examination on Advanced Psychology, a subject very near to my heart.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick has always been the pioneer in every progressive movement, both for the advancement of the profession and the higher education of the nurse, in order to equip her for the exacting demands of medical science, and in approaching her with a view to the College giving facilities for a series of Lectures on Advanced Psychology, by a mental expert, to try to stimulate general-trained nurses to take an interest in this important subject, and for those holding the double Certificate who

anticipate taking the Diploma in Mental Nursing, now granted by the University of London, my appeal met with a hearty response both from Mrs. Bedford Fenwick (President) and the Members of the Council, making it possible for the project to materialise with such admirable result. And I am most grateful to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick for affording me this opportunity of saying a few words on the psychological aspect of nursing, which, in the near future, I hope, is going to receive more serious consideration in the curriculum of general nursing, a factor which has been sadly overlooked in the past.

Psychology, as you may have been told by the lecturer, may be considered the study of the mind or the study of behaviour, and should be a subject of great importance to all nurses.

It is essential for every nurse, in whatever branch engaged, to know something of the psychology of her patient, as it will in no small measure help her in her work. I myself do not consider that general training is complete without mental training, any more than mental training is considered by the body politic complete without general training.

The complete training of a nurse, however, is a difficult problem, but as psychological disturbance plays so large a part in bodily disease, it is most desirable for all nurses to possess some knowledge of mental nursing.

It is very helpful, and, I would venture to say, advantageous, to obtain as much theoretical knowledge as possible, yet, nevertheless, theory without practice in the art of dealing with the mentally sick is of little value to the nurse, and this practical knowledge can only be obtained, as you know, in the wards of a hospital for mental diseases. In a General hospital, much can be done in an organised routine way to teach the nurse the best methods of nursing most bodily illnesses, but practical mental nursing, apart from nursing diseases of the body, is a very difficult question.

Mental nursing touches life in all its aspects, and provides opportunity for the exercise of almost every natural gift in the woman who undertakes it, because she is dealing with the most highly organised system in the human body, namely the mind, the source from which all the actions of the body are governed, and which dominates everything in sickness and health, in effect the paramount factor in human life.

Progress in this branch of Medical Science is advancing very rapidly, largely due to the wave of public interest that has been recently aroused in various forms of activity. As we all recognise that the soul of nursing is the nursing of the Soul, therefore, likewise, surely the nursing of the Mind is nearest akin to the nursing of the Soul.

Those of us who have spent many years among the mentally sick realise what exceptional qualities are necessary in the ideal psychological nurse, because she has to deal with patients who are perverse, suspicious, antagonistic, resistive, and aggressive; patients unduly emotional and indifferent to anything that life can offer.

The nurse must have intelligence to appreciate the reason for such conduct, and must have sympathy to understand it, character to withstand, perseverance to overcome, and tact to lead; she must be able to control herself, in fact a broad humanity and spirit of self-sacrifice is needed, and a development of that mothering instinct which is to be found in every woman's heart. Patients sick in mind are just like children, and require re-educating and mothering. I remember once at Morningside, when I was in charge of the gentlemen's side, one day the Commissioners were paying a visit, and when we came to one young boy who had been an artist and was recovering from a very serious mental breakdown, he introduced me to one of the Commissioners by saying, "Sir, this is my Mother." Upon leaving the ward, the Commissioner turned to me and said,

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