

In other hospitals students and nurses are now being vaccinated against tuberculosis by means of B.C.G. This system is still the subject of much controversy, and while it is being extensively adopted in some countries such as Norway, Sweden, Roumania, and others, it is still looked at askance in other countries.

In various other countries the problem of hospital infections is being dealt with in yet other ways, and it is to be hoped that with the many new advances in medicine at our disposal it should be possible to reduce these diseases, minor and major, to a very considerable degree.

(Communicated by the Secretariat of the League of Red Cross Societies.)

MEDICAL EDUCATION.

THE REFORM OF THE CURRICULUM.

Sir Norman Walton, F.R.C.S., President of the General Council of Medical Education and Registration, who presided at the Council's last opening session, said that the Council would have to consider the reports of three committees working on the concluding stages of the revision of the medical curriculum initiated in 1934. A special curriculum committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. H. Letheby Tidy, had formulated proposals for the reform of the curriculum, and most of the licensing bodies had forwarded their comments. On no previous occasion had the proposals of the Council been more thoroughly discussed.

The teaching of biology, chemistry, and physics had always been a problem. Not till 1893 had the Council ordained that biology and physics must be contained in the medical curriculum. Chemistry had been defined then as "including the principles of the science, and the details which bear on the study of medicine."

Times had changed, and the majority of schools now taught a high standard of chemistry and physics. The details of these sciences, which bore on the study of medicine, must, of course, be learnt in medical schools.

The Council, in reforming the curriculum, was helped by the elasticity of its system. If it agreed that, in order to furnish the knowledge and skill requisite for the efficient practice of the profession, the medical curriculum proper should be extended to five years, the licensing bodies, all of which were represented on the Council, would frame their regulations accordingly.

THE NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF ARMY MEDICAL SERVICES.

The War Office announces that Major-General W. P. MacArthur, D.S.O., O.B.E., M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P., F.R.C.P.I., Honorary Physician to the King, has been selected to succeed Lieutenant-General Sir James A. Hartigan, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., M.B., D.Ch., Honorary Physician to the King, as Director-General of Army Medical Services, when the latter completes his tenure of office on March 1st, 1938.

REGISTERED MALE NURSES ORGANISE.

Male Nurses have been slow to organise for professional purposes but now a male nurses' organisation has been established under the title, "Society of Registered Male Nurses." We congratulate the male nurses on their action for "Union is Strength," and only by united organisation can they hope to make their influence felt.

The Chairman of the new Society is Mr. J. E. Southwell, S.R.N., who is a member of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, the Vice-Chairman, Mr. F. A. Mace, S.R.N., R.M.N., and the Secretary, Mr. Edward J. Glavin, R.M.N., M.I.H.

PROFESSIONAL REVIEW.

"FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE." *

"Florence Nightingale," A Biography by Margaret Goldsmith is a recent book which all who are interested in the Founder of modern nursing should not fail to procure and carefully study. It gives us a deep insight into the mind of Florence Nightingale during the years of her life spent at home. "To understand her character," we are told, "it is necessary to remember that, as a child, her emotional life, regulated by rigid rules, was always thwarted."

Mrs. Nightingale had no understanding whatever of her daughter's remarkable character, but later she was to realise with a considerable shock that she must have misjudged Florence throughout her youth.

"We are ducks," Mrs. Nightingale said to Mrs. Gaskell after Florence had begun her career, "who have hatched a wild swan." Mrs. Nightingale never realised, however, that, as Lytton Strachey points out in his essay on Florence Nightingale, they had in fact hatched an eagle and not a creature as relatively tame as a wild swan.

At seventeen Florence Nightingale was longing to serve humanity. Then, on February 7th, 1837, as she records in a later diary, she had a *Call*: "God," so she wrote, "had called her to His service." "Mr. and Mrs. Nightingale must have been extremely worried by her intense manner and her preoccupied state of mind. They decided to take her abroad. So many parents, even to-day, seem to think that a change is a perfect panacea for all the troubles of adolescence."

Again, in the autumn of 1837, Mr. and Mrs. Nightingale took their daughters abroad and spent a year and a half on the Continent. "They travelled in leisurely fashion through France, breaking the journey frequently and spending a month in Nice. They next went to Italy, staying a month in Genoa and two in Florence. Then they toured the Italian Lakes. In September, 1838, they were in Geneva and in October in Paris. . . .

"Wherever they went they met old friends and made new ones. They entertained frequently. . . . For the first time in her life Florence met men and women outside her narrow county world at Embley. In Paris she was thrilled to talk to Madame de Récamier; in Geneva she spent evenings with Italian refugees and with politicians; in Florence she learned to know literary people.

"While she was abroad she gained poise and self-assurance. She began to realise that there were other people who were thoughtful like herself, that she was not as odd as her parents had made her feel. She no longer felt an outsider. Her mother, too, was pleased: Florence was less shy and awkward, she was greatly admired wherever she went." Mrs. Nightingale began to be hopeful for the future, and for her. Florence's future was, of course, centred in a brilliant marriage. But Mrs. Nightingale's hopes in this direction were, as all the world know, not destined to be fulfilled.

On her first European tour pity was Florence Nightingale's predominant characteristic. When she was older her passion for organisation, for her work, was much stronger than her pity for the human being she was helping, but as a young girl she had no work, she had only compassion.

In Paris Florence met Mary Clarke who later married Julius von Mohl, and was destined to become a close friend of Florence Nightingale. Mary Clarke was of Scotch-Irish descent, but she spent most of her life in France. When the Nightingales met her she was a woman of about forty-five, full of vitality and warmth. She had *esprit*.

*Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd., Warwick Square, London, E.C.4. 15s. net.

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