

The General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

A MEETING of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales was held at the office of the Council, 23, Portland Place, London, W., on October 28th, 1947.

Miss D. M. Smith, O.B.E., Chairman, presided.

Resignation of Miss F. M. Campbell.

The Chairman reported the receipt of a letter from Miss F. M. Campbell, submitting her resignation from the Council owing to continued ill-health.

Finance.

On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, bills and claims submitted for payment were approved and the sums of £2,400 for weekly salaries and inspectors' expenses, and £500 for postage were allowed.

Registration.

It was reported that the Registration Committee had considered various matters in connection with the Nurses Bill and made some recommendations which were approved by Council.

Education and Examination.

On the recommendation of the Education and Examination Committee, it was agreed that the Director of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University of London, be informed that the Council is in agreement with the proposal to increase the duration of the Course for the Sister Tutor's Diploma from one to two years as from October, 1951.

Applications were considered for the inclusion in schemes of training of three years' duration of hospitals at present approved as Affiliated Training Schools, this has necessitated the withdrawal of approval of the existing schemes of affiliation.

Provisional and full approval was granted to hospitals, and Pre-Nursing Courses were approved.

Disciplinary Case.

The case of Cynthia Alice Beaumont, S.R.N., 153861, was considered, and the Council agreed to postpone judgment on the conviction proved against her for one year.

Case of Postponed Judgment.

The case of Irene Allison (nee King), S.R.N., 41833 (postponed judgment for one year), was again considered and the case was dismissed with a caution.

Next Meeting of the Council.

The date of the next meeting of the Council was fixed for November 25th, 1949.

Lectures in Post Graduate Course in Neurological Nursing.

SENIOR NURSES are invited by the Matron of the National Hospital, Queen's Square, London, W.C., to attend a further series of lectures given by physicians at the hospital.

Dr. E. A. Carmichael delivered a lecture on "Diseases of the Muscle," on October 31st, and other lectures are:—

"Syphilis of the Central Nervous System," by Dr. J. Purdon Martin on November 7th; "Epilepsy," by Dr. J. St. C. Elkington on November 14th; "Inflammation of the Meninges," by Dr. D. Brinton on November 21st; "Inflammation of the Nervous System; Myelitis, Poliomyelitis, Encephalitis," by Dr. D. Williams on December 12th and 19th; "Intracranial Tumours," by Dr. S. P. Meadows, on January 16th, 1950, also "Paraplegia" on January 23rd; "Neurological Syndromes and their Gaits," by Dr. J. Purdon Martin on February 13th.

These lectures all commence at 6 p.m., and we hope senior nurses will take advantage of the opportunity offered.

Philosophy or Poetry.

A Woman's Point of View.

I TRUST I am not far wrong in saying that the severe doctrine and cold scepticism of either moral or logical philosophy seldom appeal to a woman's understanding or sway her inclination in the same way as do the eloquent passion and pathos of poetry.

Philosophy may, and probably does, mean deep reflection and a methodical reasoning on the cause and existence of things, but it has been said that women are not given to reasoning generally; to them a solid and substantial fact is far more satisfactory than any amount of theoretical arguments and learned discussion, and when they cannot have facts they prefer to rely on "their instinct." Philosophy also implies that we should look upon life and its attendant issues with calmness and self-denial, whereas women are very often emotional and sometimes unreasonable.

Moral philosophy seems to suggest that our passions, pleasures and pain should be subservient to hard-and-fast rules, or rather, that they should be ignored and despised with cynical indifference. Now a cynic is—to a woman—the most detestable of human beings, and few of them have any sympathy with the meagre sentiments and metaphysical dogmas left behind for our benefit by the dry and dead philosophers of past centuries, but their sympathies are quickly aroused by the warm passion and life-like dramas of the poets.

Logical philosophy is even worse, for it would do away with many of those principles which are the foundations of women's most cherished beliefs and which are the indispensable conditions of thought itself, such as: truth and identity; cause and effect; probability and certainty. For these are fundamental ideas which must occur to every rational mind when exercising its ordinary faculties. A witty person once cleverly defined a philosopher as a man who seizes upon human nature, nearly dissects it, conveniently sorts it out, ornamentally packs it up, and appropriately labels it ready for the future generation to make use of.

But, on the other hand, the human soul quickly responds to the even rhythm and subtle influence of poetry in a way that is never aroused by the cold and calculating dictates of philosophy. For poetry comes fresh from the human heart; it appeals to our inward and most sacred thoughts, and as our views of life widen and knowledge and experience of its complex problems deepen, it stirs our feelings with a new charm and urges us on to more profound hopes and ardent aspirations.

Philosophy may undertake to regulate our actions and passions and to direct each to its proper channel, but it is poetry that stirs our warmer feelings—our love and hate, our hopes, sympathy and ambitions are far more quickly and deeply moved by it. For it conveys to the mind images that are pure and true and makes manifest the beauties of nature in language that is eloquent and abiding. This potent influence is felt even in young children to whom philosophy is an unmeaning word, and their admiration and enthusiasm for the deeds of noble and heroic men may even become a powerful and quickening force to influence them for good and to urge them to imitate examples that are courageous and praiseworthy.

Who amongst us would dream of putting a book on philosophy into the hands of a ten-year-old child? But we should all be glad to see him reading the homely and lovable poems of Longfellow, the legendary lore of Tennyson, the martial music of Macaulay or those less known but most beautiful poems of all the "Triumphs of Petrarch."

MARGARET B. MACKELLAR.

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