

Mrs. Creighton, as usual, went to the heart of the difficulty. She stated the plain fact that good intentions and even plenty of funds won't produce efficient workers. She strongly deprecated the want of organization, the amateurishness, of parochial work. She fully admitted that it was by no means always the women's fault, that certain clergy of the old school were jealous of letting their women workers have their due share of freedom of action. But she pointed out that, if you except such duly qualified women workers as Deaconesses, lady doctors, and district nurses, you have merely a rabble of well-meaning persons, who have no training, whose zeal frequently outruns their discretion, whose leisure for the work in hand is of a spasmodic and intermittent kind, having always to be fitted in with and reconciled to, the claims of social life. She showed how much, how very much, parochial work is pre-eminently woman's sphere, and gave her hearers a humorous account of a very young curate begging to know what he was to say at a mother's meeting!! "Don't say anything; you have no right there," was her reply.

Mrs. Lyttelton, who followed, was much more impressive and forcible than on Monday evening. "Training, training, training," was the burden of her message. It has been well stated, said she, that the condition of Church work in the parish to-day is in the condition in which sick nursing was before the day of Florence Nightingale. There is no recognized training, no organization. Settlements do exist, however, and more are urgently needed. New York, as usual, is far ahead of us in this matter, and at a settlement in that city, the pupils, after a year's training, receive a certificate, and are called graduates. The relation of the fully trained, competent parish worker, should be very much on the lines of the relation of the sick nurse to the doctor. He should be called in for what the nurse cannot supply. Were there in all large parishes such a staff of fully equipped women, the clergy would be far less called upon—as they now are—to serve tables; to spend the hours that might be devoted to deeper thought, greater spirituality, and finer sermons, to coal clubs, school treats, mothers' meetings and the like. In fact, it would very likely prove advantageous in parishes where many clergy are employed, to have such a trained worker instead of one of the curates.

Mrs. Lyttelton was strongly in favour of all such work being properly paid. People say that, if you offer good salaries, you encourage a class of persons to go in for philanthropic work, simply

as a means of livelihood; you don't get the right kind of person. But this argument does not seem admissible. Priests are paid; doctors are paid; nurses are paid. Unsalariated work does not, as a matter of fact, turn out to be the best work. The woman who entered upon such a profession simply for financial reasons, would soon be found out, and become a failure, just as much as the sick nurse whose heart is not in her work, soon finds herself without recommendations.

The most interesting part of the meeting to us, personally, was the paper read by Mrs. Bishop, the wonderful woman traveller, who has penetrated to parts of Asia where no white woman was ever seen before, who has been a guest in the nomadic Persian tents, in the villages of Corea, in China, India, Arabia, all over the vast continent. Her appearance is entirely gentle and unassuming, her whole manner characterized by the greatest modesty and simplicity. One felt sure that what she said was true, that there was no exaggeration for purposes of inspiring horror; and what she had to say of the women of Asia was enough to make the women of Europe weep. The true inwardness of Mrs. Stetson's contention, of the inestimable harm to the race caused by the entire dependence of women, comes home with awful force when one hears of the five hundred million secluded women, denied all outlet into life except through the exercise of sex functions. They have, officially, no souls; in Corea, they have even no name, unless they bear a son. Needless to say, they live down to their reputation. In all Asia you would not find a single man who would trust a woman. They are cruel, jealous, treacherous, impure, morally stunted; yet the influence they wield is enormous. In more than fifty of the hundred or so of harems in which Mrs. Bishop has been a guest, was she asked for a drug that would destroy a rival. In one, the favourite wife was dying, and the husband implored the visitor to sit in the wretched creature's room, to restrain, if she could, the malice and cruelty of the other women, who had her in their power.

This mass of horrors can only be touched by women. Let us bear this in mind. No man missionary, however devoted, can penetrate to the life behind the purdah. Surely the hour of the mission of women to women has sounded. Let those who cry that there is no room for them in England go forth to try and pierce the darkness that veils untold, unspeakable, strongholds of misery and sin.

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