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Editorial.

THE NEED OF MISSIONARY NURSES.

There is probably no branch of work in which the services of nurses are so urgently needed as in the mission field, and we are glad to know that this need is to be brought before them during the Pan-Anglican Congress on the Nurses' Day, at the meeting at the Church House on the afternoon of June 23rd.

Surely the test of the vitality of any church is to be gauged by its obedience to the last command of its Divine Master, and by its faithful delivery to the uttermost ends of the earth of His message, "I am come that they might have life."

And the responsibility as well as the joy of bearing this message belongs peculiarly to nurses, for they readily obtain access to those who are reached with difficulty by the ordinary missionary.

The first and most important sphere of influence for a nurse in a heathen country is naturally the hospital ward. She may be but newly arrived from home, may understand but little of the language spoken by her patients, but if she has the instinct of the true missionary her work tells from the first, and though she may not be aware of it, her Christianity is on its trial. As she goes up and down the ward many pairs of eyes are watching her, and her patients judge of the religion she professes by her daily life. She stands out before them as a concrete example of Christianity. If her standards are low, her patients' conception of Christianity as a religion will be low also. If her standards are high, they gain through her a glimpse of the teachings of the Master whom she serves, and a certain proportion become inquirers into the truths of the religion whose beauty was first revealed to them by the life and example of a Christian nurse.

Again, the nurse has her mission to those

who, by the conventions of their country, are cut off from all intercourse with the outer world. For her the purdah behind which the women in the zenanas of India are closely confined is lifted, and she passes in to relieve as far as she may the weight of misery—physical, moral and mental—which is there enshrined. She carries also the message of hope which is the motive of her own life, and which has brought joy even into the dreary lives of those behind the purdah.

Apart from the honour of being engaged in definite mission service, the missionary nurse has the satisfaction of knowing she is doing a bit of work which would otherwise be left undone. It is a thought to inspire her with fresh courage in moments of discouragement.

The Bishop of Lahore, writing of the Pan-Anglican Thank-offering to be made on June 24th, attaches primary importance to its living portion, and asserts that "the true measure of success of the Church's offering that day will be, under God, in proportion to the number of living members of the Body of Christ who then offer themselves for the work of the Church in far distant lands," and he goes on to point to medical missions as the direction in which most urgent need exists. He declares that each year of added experience and work in India deepens his conviction of the extreme value of this work, and the impossibility of attaining similar results in any other way. He expresses the "most earnest hope that amongst those who offer themselves for the King's service there may be not a few thoroughly qualified lady doctors and nurses," and expresses deep regret that so far no offers of this kind have been received. We hope that the nurses' meeting on June 23rd will be largely attended, and that its result will be to discover vocations for missionary work and to stimulate offers of service.

M. B.

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