

hygiene, many not even knowing the proper function or mechanism of a drain pipe, and said that there was also a necessity for increased vigilance with regard to the disinfection of their clothes. She had known nurses leave infectious hospitals and walk the streets in the clothing in which they had been carrying on their work.

Miss C. J. Wood described the difficulties attendant upon the village nursing of infectious cases. She suggested a linked scheme, having the district hospital or the workhouse infirmary as a centre, from which trained nurses and village nurses could be organised.

Miss M. E. Tait's paper on the "Hygiene of Dress" contained much information on the proper kind of clothing to be worn to promote health. She was particularly severe in dealing with the tight lacing of corsets.

But *the* paper of the Conference was read by Dr. Mary Sturge on "The Claims of Childhood." She spoke of the effect of heredity on child life. Young married people should realise that the making or marring of the health of their children rests upon their careful observation of the laws of health during their courtship and early married life. Girls should be taught that if they would be good mothers they should not drink tea all day or lace tightly, and that the alcoholic habit in either parent impaired the constitution of their children even before they were born. In early years children should have ample time for rest, for it was the over-trained little ones who later on were taken to the hospitals with St. Vitus's dance. They should always have ample space to play in the sunshine. Sir Joseph Payrer spoke of the pleasure with which he had listened to the paper, and congratulated Dr. Sturge upon it. He was particularly glad that she had spoken on the objection to over-training, and the necessity of rest for the proper development of a child. The great anxiety now seemed to be to stimulate the brain to get as much as possible out of it, quite forgetting that that was done at the time when the brain required rest to enable it to develop and attain to its full powers. Instead, the great object of education should be to gently nurture in order that the child as it grew up might learn how to learn.

At the conclusion of the papers, Dr. Mary Sturge moved: "That this conference desires to draw the attention of the Council of the Institute to the following questions affecting the national health and needing urgent consideration—viz., the growing practice of smoking amongst boys, and the need for the establishment of official centres where nurses may be registered for the purpose of employment in villages." Mrs. Ashford seconded the motion, and it was adopted.—A vote of thanks to the Lady Mayoress concluded the proceedings.

It is a satisfactory feature of most Congresses at the present day that a section, at least, is devoted to the discussion of subjects of especial interest to women, and that women show themselves eminently capable of taking charge of these sections both in conducting the meetings, and in writing papers upon, and discussing the subjects under consideration. They have certainly proved their capacity to take part in public affairs when they are permitted to do so.

## The Health Exhibition.

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

THE busy capital of the Midlands seemed at its busiest last week. To begin with it was "Onion Fair," always a time for family reunion amongst the lower classes in Birmingham, and the excursion trains which conveyed the country cousins to the various stations groaned under their burdens, then the Sanitary Congress, and the Health Exhibition attracted many more, and so, as the days wore on, the streets became more and more crowded, and the good people jostled and elbowed and pushed their way about, as only Birmingham people can, for they seem to have a supreme contempt for the rule of the road, and to make straight for their destination, regardless of all obstacles, human and otherwise. If a few people get knocked down by the way, well, it is unfortunate, but it can't be helped.

The Health Exhibition is in Bingley Hall, a huge building in which 15,000 people can be comfortably accommodated. Birmingham does all things on a colossal scale, and the Health Exhibition is no exception to the rule. The huge hall is well filled with exhibits, and an excellent musical programme is provided, and is evidently appreciated by many. Birmingham folk, the working-classes included, are notoriously musical, and indifferent music would certainly find many critics.

The Nursing Section—I went to see first, it being naturally the part of the Exhibition in which I was most interested. What can I say except to express the deep disappointment I felt that so excellent an opportunity of demonstrating the scientific progress of nursing, and of showing the various appliances now in use should have been entirely missed. I hoped much of Birmingham, for, being Birmingham born and bred I have a rooted belief in the progressiveness, and capacity of my native city, and know how well, and thoroughly it carries through, as a rule, anything which it undertakes. It was the greater disappointment therefore to find that the so-called "Nursing Section" consisted of a stall of Messrs. Southall's, Lower Priory, Birmingham, another devoted to Dr. Jaeger's Sanitary Woollen Underclothing, and a third to Lawson Tait Spring Bedsteads. Of scientific nursing exhibits, nurses' inventions, or nurses' handiwork there were none—absolutely. The failure of this section, so far as I can gather, is due no doubt to the fact that none of the leading Matrons of the city were invited to organize it. Without professional organization such a section was, of course, bound to be a failure. Well, perhaps by next year the authorities will have learnt a lesson, and will at the next Health Exhibition put the Nursing Section into the hands of experts. Some demonstrations on bed making, poultice making, etc., which were given twice a day by a nurse from the Private Nurses' Institution, at the Crescent, Birmingham, attracted sufficient attention to show how popular this section might have been made had it been thoroughly worked up. Dummy figures were placed in the beds, and the various processes of sheet changing, etc., were shown with these. Messrs. Southall's stall it goes without saying was excellent, and complete. The NURSING RECORD has more than once commented upon the excellent nursing appliances shown by this firm. As novelties, I noticed a portable pocket lamp, which should be very useful, and a baby scale, for weighing infants.

(To be continued).

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