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## Editorial.

### AN APPALLING CALAMITY.

The whole world has stood aghast at the awful calamity which has overwhelmed the city of San Francisco, the Golden Gate of Western America, and many would have been the offers of personal and of financial aid had it not been announced that the United States is capable of rendering all the assistance necessary. This, combined with the fact that on Monday last the inhabitants of San Francisco began to rebuild their ruined city affords a striking illustration of the self-help, energy, and indomitable pluck which are characteristic of the American people and have made them a power in the nations of the world. We congratulate General Funston on the resourcefulness he has shown at this crisis. The General first distinguished himself as a volunteer officer in the Spanish War, so that President McKinley gave him the rank of Brigadier-General in the regular Army, an appointment which at the time caused great criticism. Present events have, however, justified the appointment, the General rose to the crisis, and, without waiting for orders, marched his entire command into the city, placing his troops at the disposal of the Mayor, and in reality assuming the command and maintaining order.

The details to hand as to the medical and nursing arrangements are meagre, but there is enough to show that both doctors and nurses are rising splendidly to the occasion. That nurses are well organised in San Francisco we know from the *Nurses' Journal of the Pacific Coast*, of whose editor Miss Geneviève Cooke we recently published an account in this Journal, and, of whose safety, tidings will be anxiously awaited.

It will be remembered that there is at San Francisco a splendid military hospital, the Presidio, and there the sick are now being cared for. Churches and schools

are being utilised as refuges, and there is every reason to hope that the situation is now well in hand.

It is reassuring to learn that there is at present no indication of an epidemic. That there is some danger of it is evident from the fact that the patients in the infectious hospital, which took fire, vacated it in the panic which ensued, and have probably been mingling with the inhabitants ever since. As a precautionary measure thousands are being vaccinated, and the doctors are kept hard at work. It is a fortunate coincidence that at the time the shock occurred the State of California Medical Association was holding its Annual Convention, and the services of the delegates were thus available, and freely given, in dealing with the wounded and making arrangements for combating disease.

It is impossible to estimate accurately the loss of life which has occurred, but this by no means represents the ultimate effect of the catastrophe. The sick and injured in hospital number some 6,000 persons. Time only can show the extent of the nervous troubles produced by the disaster. Pneumonia also is likely to be the result of the exposure of persons insufficiently clad, who as a rule are quite unused to hardship, while many confinements have taken place before it was possible to remove the patients to any kind of hospital.

It is at such times as this that the importance of the work of medical practitioners and nurses is forced on the public attention. That they are rising to the demands made upon them no one will doubt, but more than ever we realise the responsibility which falls on those who have the training of nurses, in the selection of pupils who are of the right calibre to afford the utmost moral as well as physical assistance in times of calamity, such as that which has recently appalled the world.

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