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## Editorial.

### THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE.

The uniform of the soldier was a noticeable feature at the Red Cross Conference held in London last week, and while this affords proof of the statement of the President of the Conference, Lord Roberts, that soldiers keenly appreciate the work of the Red Cross Society, we confess we should have liked also to see in evidence the uniform of the trained nurse, to whose special province Red Cross work belongs.

A note sounded plainly throughout the Conference was the value of the services of women in connection with Red Cross work. Thus General Priou, speaking of the place of women in hospitals in time of war, said he hoped the time would soon come when no woman, sensible of her patriotic duties, and anxious to discharge them, would hesitate to ask for instruction from teachers ready to give it to her. The delegates did not forget that it was to Miss Florence Nightingale that the British Army, to a large extent, owed the happy change which was effected in its hygienic condition during the second period of the Crimean War, and it was owing to women that the hospitals in Manchuria and Siberia during the late war were distinguished by cleanliness and good order which could only be secured by feminine supervision. Women were well qualified to supervise hospitals, as well as to superintend culinary, laundry, and secretarial work. He invited the Conference to express the hope that in all nations the greatest efforts should be made to bring the masses to recognise and to understand well the necessity of employing women in the territorial hospitals in time of war—

a proposition which was unanimously agreed to.

It is not too much to say that the success of the work of the International Red Cross Society depends largely on the way in which it arouses the interest and secures the help of women. Not merely of women animated by feelings of patriotism, but having no special training in any branch of work. These women may share in the work by collecting funds and by rendering kindly services to sick and wounded in time of war and calamity. But the secret of success in any undertaking depends upon efficiency, and efficiency in its turn depends upon the utilisation of the brains and the skilled work of the expert worker. Therefore, it is most important that the Society should secure the interest of trained nurses and women expert in the various branches of work which were enumerated by General Priou; for it is upon the services of such women that the Society will have to depend in time of war and national calamity to carry out a large portion of its work. The British Red Cross Society has so far been ineffective because it has failed to seek, and therefore to secure, the interest of the expert worker.

It has lately been reconstituted by the fusion of two existing bodies, the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War and the Central British Red Cross Council, and, in its new form, will undertake the duty of the organisation of Red Cross work throughout the Empire. Let us hope that the splendid example of efficiency set by the Japanese Red Cross Society, and the stimulus given to organisation by the recent International Red Cross Conference, will result in the development of a vigorous and efficient Society in the British Empire.

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