

## International Congress of Nurses.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 23rd.

2 to 4 p.m.

### THE NURSE IN THE MISSION FIELD.

Miss M. A. SNIVELY presided over the last Session of the Congress, which was devoted to the consideration of "The Nurse in the Mission Field." Miss Snively said everyone must have been impressed during the Congress with the fact that whatever work the nurse chose whether in private practice or in hospital, whether she bound up the sore fingers of the school children, infused new courage into the sufferer from mental disease, or went into the homes of the poor as a district nurse, in whatever sphere she chose to labour if she was a true nurse she was essentially a missionary.

If we considered why we had met together to discuss the various phases of our work so that we might each go home to our respective duties hoping to do better work in the future than in the past, if we asked why we desired to help other people to live better, cleaner, and nobler lives, we should probably answer that it was because we lived in a Christian land. But Britons were not always Christians, nor did Britons of a few centuries ago think as those we found to-day in this great land. What had brought about the change? We could only answer it was the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of Peace and Goodwill to men. But there were in the world to-day millions living in the dark places of the earth which were full of the habitations of cruelty, and we were now to consider how far we, as trained nurses, were responsible for this condition, and how we could help to make the lot of these people happier. We rejoiced to know that this subject had a place in the programme of this great Congress, and we fully believed that each one of us would go back more and more impressed with the idea, "God doth with us as men with torches do."

Miss Snively then called on Miss E. Margaret Fox, Matron of the Prince of Wales' Hospital, Tottenham, to present the first paper.

### THE NURSE IN THE MISSION FIELD. HER NECESSARY ATTRIBUTES AND TRAINING. PREPARATION FOR THE WORK.

Miss Fox said that deep down in the soul must be the first beginnings of a fitness for the Mission Field. From without would probably come the impulse, for many were the "thousand unnoticed openings" through which approach spiritual light and sound to the human soul, but within must be the answering vibration, the responsive note, the suitable soil for the wind-borne germ of holy desire that should grow and fructify into a perfect life work.

Miss Fox placed as the first qualification for mis-

sion work the earnest desire born of an inward spiritual longing to help those who without such aid would drift unaided into the dark valley, helpless for this life, hopeless for that which is to come.

Then the nurse seeking work in the Mission Field must be of very definite Christian character, with an intelligent knowledge of the doctrines of her religion, and a close acquaintance with her Bible. True, she did not go out ostensibly to teach or preach, but would have many opportunities of supplementing the missionaries' spiritual work, which she might not miss, and she would have many questions put to her which, as a Christian and a member of a missionary society, she would be expected to be able to answer. It was quite a mistake to suppose that because men and women were natives of India, China, and the Congo, or elsewhere, they were lacking in intelligence, and could be put off with replies which would not satisfy the intellect of a child of seven. Subtleness of mind, and undreamed of reasoning powers, might exist side by side with idol worship, and unspeakable manners and customs. Nor must the Bible be regarded as a lesson book. Its examples must be followed, its precepts obeyed, its pages studied with prayer and love, if its lessons were to be stored in the memory and to illuminate the life.

Cheery optimism, readiness to make the best of things, quick resourcefulness made largely for success in workers in the Mission Field. Grumblers were not wanted. They were like grit in the eye, or a knot in the thread. They hindered clear vision, and spoilt the beauty of the work. Unselfishness, a gracious and pleasant manner, a steadfast belief in one's mission, a firm adherence to right, character of the highest type, and, in addition, grit, grip, call it what you would, all combined to make the successful mission worker.

Again, a nurse should cultivate the reading habit, and also read nursing journals, and learn from them the latest methods and newest ideas so that she might not for ever bear upon her the date of her last year in hospital. Some nurses, mission and otherwise, never got beyond that last year. They seemed to think that progress ended there, and forgot that old age begins when the mind, instead of reaching forward, allows the tendrils of the past to cramp its efforts and draw it backwards.

The saving grace of humour was a gift not to be despised, and helped its lucky possessor over many a difficult place and round many an awkward corner, and to the nurse's mental requirements must be added patience and an aptness to teach almost apostolic in its immensity.

In the matter of training, Miss Fox laid down the rule—"Nothing less than the best will do for foreign mission work," and in addition to training in general nursing a knowledge of midwifery was most essential, and if time permitted the aspirant for missionary nursing should qualify as a dispenser.

Nor should she suffer any special talents such as music or drawing to fall into disuse. But foremost amongst a nurse's attributes, chiefest lesson of her whole training time, source of all her efforts

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