

The Japan-British Exhibition.

THE NURSING SESSION OF THE WOMEN'S CONGRESS.

Lady Helen Munro Ferguson presided at the Nursing Session at the Japan-British Exhibition on Saturday last.

In opening the session Lady Helen said that those who had organised it were fully aware that it was impossible to do justice to such a subject as nursing in two short hours, but when the whole work of women was under review it was felt that the nursing of the sick, which had been practised since the closing of the Garden of Eden, must be included in the scope of the Conference.

Nursing was a branch of work which especially appealed to women who ventured without the home circle to earn their living. Statisticians stated that there were a round million of women in the kingdom who must compulsorily remain single. Nursing satisfied not only the mental but all the instincts of the feminine nature, including the maternal instinct. In the life of a district nurse, for instance, there was practically unlimited scope, and all the talents which might have gone to the making of one home were, in a district nurse, at the service of the country in making many homes.

There was no profession open to women in which the more feminine women could so well obtain self expression. The happiest mortals were those whose work and inclinations led them in the same direction.

Many years of hard, mental, and physical work went to the making of a nurse, although some people, especially in their more robust and healthy moments, thought that a little knowledge and much good will were sufficient, especially, for some mysterious reason, for the nurses of the sick poor in rural districts.

In calling upon Miss E. S. Haldane, LL.D., to present the first paper the Chairman said that the British Red Cross Society offered women the only opportunity they could have of taking an effective part in national defence. How great a part that might be was shown by the women of Japan and of France. The latter were prepared to offer their Government 45 field hospitals of 100 beds each, which could mobilise with any corps. They also offered stationary territorial hospitals, which would accommodate 35,000 sick and wounded, four of which would be ready nine days after mobilisation, and the rest sixteen. British women were supposed to be competent to deal with any situation, and she believed an appeal had only to be made to them by the Red Cross Society to secure an immediate response.

TERRITORIAL NURSING AND RED CROSS ORGANISATION.

Miss Haldane prefaced her paper by saying that she wished to say a few words about a new movement in the country, a new development of the Territorial scheme, which was as they knew, very largely a re-organisation of the old Volunteer Force. The material ready to hand in that Force was taken and welded into a new organisation; a

real army of home defence, a task which the nation had taken up with splendid enthusiasm. What was almost lacking in the older Force was an efficient medical service. It was of little use to have 300,000 men or more to defend our shores unless provision was made to relieve the army of the sick and wounded by their removal to the rear in orderly fashion. By means of a diagram Miss Haldane then described how this removal was to be accomplished, and the way in which women could work for the Army, as really as if they shouldered the musket and handled the sword. There was opportunity for all who were physically fit to put their hands to the work, through Voluntary Aid Detachments established all over the country, and the formation of which was unlimited. Each detachment was registered at the War Office, and would be periodically inspected. The movement was a peace movement, and the training received in first aid and nursing by the members of the detachments would be useful to them in civil life, in which small, and unfortunately large, accidents also, were not infrequent. The nation must be organised, down to the last pin, whether for peace or war.

JAPANESE RED CROSS WORK.

Miss Ethel McCaul, R.R.C., then presented the next paper on Japanese Red Cross Work. Miss McCaul said she had the good fortune to see the Japanese Red Cross Society at work in time of war, and it was an example to every other country. She attributed its remarkable success to its national character, and likened its work to a silken thread woven into the life of the nation. The Japanese War Office and Red Cross Society worked hand in hand.

The Japanese nation were willing to have organised control over their sentiments, which they put into the keeping of their Red Cross Society. The Society was first founded in 1877, and acceded to the Geneva Convention in 1886. At the present time it had a million members, and an income of nearly £1,000,000 per annum. Interest in Red Cross work in time of war was easy to arouse, but Japanese genius had conceived the idea of keeping this interest alive in the absence of excitement, in time of peace.

In time of peace the Red Cross Hospitals were used for civil purposes, the headquarters being at Tokio, where there is a hospital of 700 beds. They also had the monopoly of training Red Cross nurses, of whom there were a reserve of 3,000. Each nurse, when her three years' training was completed, was bound to work for the Society for 15 years, if required, but she was free to marry or to work elsewhere.

To Japan belonged the honour, not generally recognised, of obtaining the neutralisation of hospital ships.

The Ladies' Volunteer Nursing Association in Japan was a Society within a Society. In other countries, women's work was allowed to drift, but in Japan it was systematised, and the offices of the Red Cross Society became factories and workshops for the Government in war.

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