

## The Nurses' Missionary League Exhibition.

The Nurses' Missionary League is to be congratulated on the success of its first exhibition on May 9th at the Holborn Hall, organised for the benefit of nurses. Throughout the day relays of nurses visited the Exhibition, and formed interested audiences at the short addresses given at frequent intervals, the "side shows," the Chinese Feast in charge of Miss Tippet—the Zenana, where Miss Houghton and Miss Hobbes described the life of Indian women, and a depressed looking widow in white sat on the floor and ground corn for the evening meal—and the Japanese reception, organised by Miss A. M. Henty, gave great pleasure as well as much information to members.

Blindness is prevalent in Japan, and no wonder. Imagine numbers of people with bad eyes touching first an idol, previously touched by hundreds of others with eyes in an infectious condition, and then placing their fingers on their own eyes, hoping for healing!

The numerous dishes provided in connection with the Chinese Feast were supplied from a Chinese restaurant, and though they did not appear appetising to Western eyes, they are really delicacies in China. Some adroitness was necessary in managing the cup of tea with the inverted saucer on the top, people with long noses being specially handicapped, and surely those who are to eat comfortably with chopsticks must begin their apprenticeship on emerging from babyhood in order to acquire the art. Various interesting exhibits were on view here, including the outfit of a Chinese doctor, whose practice includes the belief that there are some 200 places in the body which may be punctured to let out the poisons, or the evil spirit causing the disease. In one instance Miss Tippet (of the Wilson Memorial Hospital, Pingyangfu, China) tells that the patient's heart was punctured, and death, of course, ensued. The doctor gave strict instructions that the man was on no account to be disturbed for some hours, pocketed his fee, and made off! The instruments used for making these punctures are supposed to be made of gold or silver, but in reality are usually of steel, often rusty and dirty, and are a cause of much aggravation of pain as well as a great danger.

Can anyone hear of the life of Indian women in the Zenanas without wishing to do something to lighten the burden of the infertile days, the dreariness of outlook which sur-

rounds our Indian sisters? The tale of the Indian zenanas is no new one, and yet the force of its appeal should be increased rather than lessened by this fact. Year in year out the stunted life goes on behind the purdah, varied by the pain and peril of childbirth—a very real peril indeed where skilled help is not forthcoming—and the one change to look forward to in the future is that to widowhood, when the woman is treated as something degraded. Henceforth her coloured clothing and ornaments are discarded, she is dressed in white, and becomes the drudge of the household.

Truly the appeal of the Zenanas can never lose its urgency or lessen its insistence with those who have ears to hear, until the present conditions are swept away. As is always the case when an injustice is done, it eventually recoils upon those who perpetrate it, and the men of India who have come into touch with modern progress find they are handicapped by their wives, who are still untouched by its influence.

So in regard to the adoption of Christianity. A man who desired to profess his belief and to accept Christian baptism, went home to find that his mother had beaten herself until the blood came, and his wife was dressed as a widow. To a man who cared for his wife, and who knew well what the life of an Indian widow meant the struggle was terrible. "How can I let my little wife become a widow?" was his cry, "I can't do it."

Again, we were told that the key to the Christianizing of India is the instruction of the women. To gain the men only is like rowing with one oar. The women have an enormous influence in an Indian household, and when they are Christian their children will be taught from babyhood.

One of the hardest workers where all worked hard was Miss Tippet, for in addition to presiding over the Chinese Feast, with the aid of other willing helpers, she gave many addresses in the course of the day, besides speaking at the evening meeting. At one of the afternoon addresses she told of the hardship undergone by the Chinese women at the time of their confinements. A rope is tied round the waist and gradually drawn tighter and tighter. The patient is held up by her hair, and for three days and nights is not allowed to go to sleep. Is it any wonder that much ill health dates from the time of childbirth, and also that exhaustion not infrequently results in death? Miss Tippet, who has a strong vein of humour underlying her intense earnestness, told the tale of a patient to whom she

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)