

## THE NURSES' MISSIONARY LEAGUE

To those nurses—happily an increasing number—who are interested in the work of Foreign Missions, and more especially to those who hope eventually to work in the Foreign Mission field, the series of lectures to be given during the present month, under the auspices of the Nurses' Missionary League, at University Hall, Gordon Square, W.C., will be of great interest and usefulness.

The first of the series was given on Friday evening, November 3rd, when Miss Lena Fox, M.D., was in the chair, and the Rev. Dugald Macfadyen, M.A., spoke of "Christian Missions and the Modern Mind." The bent of a nurse's mind is usually practical, and it is a little difficult for her to concentrate it on abstract theological questions; yet, to take a homely illustration from our own work, a nurse cannot hope to be successful unless she has a clear idea of the dangers to be watched for and avoided, and the difficulties which she is likely to meet in caring for a case, in the same way a candidate for work in the Foreign Mission field ought to take pains to understand the problems she will meet and the good and bad points in the great religions of the world to which many millions of people owe allegiance—Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, and the religion of Zoroaster—before going abroad. If we waited to learn the technique of our profession until the sick and wounded were pouring into hospital from the battlefield, the result would be disaster; and how shall we effectively press home upon others the facts of the Christian verities, in place of religions in which they are sincere believers, if at first contact with them we are bound to admit that we know nothing of the forms of religion which we invite them to renounce?

Mr. Macfadyen, in a closely reasoned address, referred to the Edinburgh Missionary Conference as the watershed between two eras of missionary work. It did not, perhaps, bring new facts into the field so much as a consciousness of factors which had been growing in silence. The nineteenth-century missionary was a discoverer—quite as great a man as an inventor, and his work was done at a high level of personal heroism. But another element had gradually dawned on our consciousness, that, while the missionary was heroic, the Church was sporadic in her movements. The great sacrifices made by heroic missionaries might sometimes have been saved if there had been more understanding and co-operation, if before settling on a sphere of work missionaries had studied and profited by the experiences of those who had gone before.

The criticisms of missionary work in the 25 years which had just ended were of two kinds. First, criticism of methods. The kind of criticism offered by globe trotters, of which the ripples were started in the smoking rooms of the great liners. Those who studied the literature of the great religions on the spot knew that it was dead as a force, but it was quite a different matter when we considered these religions from a popular and esoteric stand-

point. We had to justify our answer to the question, "Are you sure you have a greater message to take?" for there was much that was very beautiful and noble in them. There were things to accept, as well as to reject, and we must be perfectly sincere and faithful to admit "this is right" be ready to admit "this is right" and to declare "that is wrong."

As the nineteenth century was a time of discovery and pioneer missionary work, the twentieth century should be one of construction, and of the development of native indigenous churches. Communities must be taught the dignity and responsibility of self-government, while the work connected with Europeans would develop more on institutional lines. For instance, the work of hospitals in China for many a day would have to be mainly conducted by Europeans.

One of the discoveries of the Edinburgh Conference had been that we had been going to the East with inadequate doctrines of God, and of the resources of the God whom we serve. We were too nervously anxious to see the methods we know at home reproduced abroad, instead of realizing that God has His own plan of development for the various races.

The chief characteristics of a spiritual religion were that its work was creative, guiding, redeeming, perfecting. To emphasise redeeming work was the contribution of Christianity. This was its unique message, and the example of Christ was a combination of the white radiance of perfect holiness with the power of dealing with and understanding the chief of sinners. In order that the world might appreciate His estimate of sin, Christ willingly accepted the full penalty of identifying Himself with a sinful race by His death upon the Cross, and it was perfectly true that His followers who gave themselves to the service of others might be called upon to share His sufferings, even to the cost of their lives.

The second criticism mentioned by the speaker as more serious than that of the globe trotter was that of men who visited the East for business purposes, and who said that missions were suffering from a want of business methods, that missionaries were heroic, but what really was wanted was more generalship, when there would be less necessity for so much heroism.

## THE IRISH NURSING WORLD.

Miss Annie Damer, of New York, past President of the American Nurses' Association, has been spending a week at the Nurses' Hostel, 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. The nursing world in Dublin was delighted to make Miss Damer's acquaintance, not only on her own account, but also because of her close association with Miss Dock. Miss Damer spent every minute of her time in "looking round." She visited general and special Hospitals, and District Nurses' Homes, besides the usual sights.

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