

THE HEALTH EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE AT BRISTOL.

NURSES' DAY.

The Health Exhibition and Conference organized by the Nurses' Social Union, in connection with the Triennial Fête of the Union, and opened at the Victoria Rooms, Clifton, Bristol, on Thursday last week to nurses, and on Friday to the public, is the first of its kind to be held in the provinces, and the promoters are greatly to be congratulated on the way in which they have presented the importance of nursing in the promotion of the national health to the public.

At the opening ceremony the chair was taken by Mr. Joseph Storrs Fry, Chairman of the General Hospital, Bristol, who spoke of the great interest of the occasion, and referred to nursing as one of the most important occupations in which women could be engaged. He spoke of the great changes which had taken place within his memory. He remembered the time when nurses had hardly any status, when training was insufficient, and the opportunities of nurses not comparable to those they enjoy now. To-day the place held by them in connection with the healing art was of the very first importance, and he congratulated them on their great services to the community in the past, which were, he believed, destined to increase still more in days to come.

The moral aspect also gave cause for great thankfulness. Nurses not only alleviated human suffering, but came in contact with the higher sphere of human life in its relation to the unseen. Their faces were often the last seen, and their voices the last heard on this side the veil. They should, therefore, be tender, full of love and spiritual help. "I am," concluded the chairman, "deeply thankful for the work in which you are engaged, and wish you the Divine help that you may be an unspeakable blessing to those with whom you come in contact."

THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION.

Miss Amy Hughes, President of the Nurses' Social Union, then declared the Conference and Exhibition open, and said how interesting it was to find the development of the technical work of nurses and their great responsibilities becoming recognised as part of the social work of the community.

The object of the Nurses' Social Union was to bring together every branch of the profession, and make their work something which would affect for good the people amongst whom they live.

Miss Hughes emphasised the fact that in carrying out medical orders grave responsibility rested upon nurses. They should never forget that patients were not "cases," but people. In the houses of their patients private nurses and district nurses had a great personal responsibility for the influence they brought to bear on people and their surroundings. Every house they entered was the better or worse for their technical ministrations and

professional influence. Nurses were called upon to deal with difficult social questions; and in their hospital work were confronted with difficult problems. In the home environment of the people the opportunities of a woman of the right sort were unbounded.

Ignorance and superstition were by no means confined to the poorer classes, and nurses had to remove many misapprehensions.

The Nurses' Social Union helped them to cooperate. Nothing was worse for nurses than to get into a groove—my work, my patient, what I am doing. They must get out of that.

She hoped that the Conference week would be a happy one; and that they would go away from it determined to make their uniform more honoured and respected than it had always been in the past. They needed recognition by the State, as a body of professional women, and proof of this was afforded in the formation of the committees under the National Insurance Act.

They were not yet properly recognised and registered by the State as a body of women with standardised training, without whom the medical profession could not get on. They must therefore, walk humbly but steadily on, and do their best to make their profession one worthy of having been founded by Florence Nightingale, and nobly carried on by others.

At the conclusion of her address, there was a pleasant little episode, when Miss Fry asked Miss Hughes' acceptance of a beautiful shower bouquet of pink carnations and asparagus fern; and Miss Douglas presented Miss Joseph, the County Organiser, with a bouquet of white Mary lilies and roses, tied with soft satin ribbon.

Miss Eden proposed a vote of thanks to Miss Hughes, and said that she had given help to the Nurses' Social Union from the first.

Miss Fry, who seconded, said that the success of the exhibition was largely due to Miss Joseph, the Hon. Organizing Secretary, who had the able help of Miss Symonds.

NURSES AND NATIONAL NEEDS.

In the afternoon of Nurses' Day Dr. Marion Linton presided, when Dr. Mary Sturge lectured on "Nurses and National Needs."

Dr. Sturge said that when she told a Matron that she was to address the nurses at Bristol and asked what she should say, the reply she received was "Tell them to think." As she herself went round the hospital wards she asked herself, "Ought that woman to be ill—that man to have that disease—that child to be blind?" Our country had great needs. The problem was what were we doing; what ought we to do? Nurses, said Dr. Sturge, were beacons in the houses of their patients; they were there to save the situation. If we look around we see on the surface beauty, beneath terrible illness. We ought to go about asking "Why?" What could nurse do in relation to the mass of humanity filling the hospitals? They could help the mothers of England to bring up their boys and girls with holy, healthy thoughts on the sex question.

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