

## THE COLONIAL NURSING ASSOCIATION.

The Annual Meeting of the Colonial Nursing Association was held on Thursday, June 13th, at Devonshire House, the Rt. Hon. the Lord Amptill, G.C.I.E., President of the Association, was in the Chair, and H.R.H. Princess Henry of Battenberg, Patroness of the Association, was present.

Lord Amptill said that his remarks would be brief, but he would be neglectful if he did not allude to the exceptionally fortunate circumstances under which the friends of the Association were assembled this year. The meeting was honoured by the presence of Princess Henry of Battenberg, and had the immense advantage of assembling in an historic and beautiful house, by the kind permission of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, who without question were foremost in assisting every undertaking which had as its object the promotion of unity and good feeling throughout the Empire.

### SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

Lord Amptill then called upon the Rt. Hon. Lewis Harcourt, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies, to move the adoption of the Annual Report.

The Colonial Secretary said that he regarded it as a pleasure and a privilege to attend the meeting. A Colonial Secretary must have a complete knowledge of the area covered by the work of the nurses of the Association, and its history was one of continual attainment. The subscriptions amounted to between £400 and £500, and an enlargement of the funds was greatly to be desired, but he knew of no organisation which expended its money to greater advantage.

Mr. Harcourt referred to the loss sustained by the Scottish Branch in the resignation of the Presidency by Lady Balfour of Burleigh, in whom they had found a constant fund of industry and kindness upon which to draw, but they were fortunate to find a very capable successor in Lady Dunedin.

There was hardly a red spot in the map in which the nurses of the Association were not working, whether in the rigours of the Falklands, or the tropical regions of Uganda and Central Africa; in the Seychelles (described by Gordon as the Garden of Eden), in Selangor, the Straits Settlements and the Bahamas their services had spread for the succour of mankind.

In Canada, owing to the great development of that Western land, Saskatchewan and the prairies had called in their aid through the mayors of the prairie towns and the Canadian Church Railway Mission, but, as in South Africa, the work of the nurses was unsectarian. Unless one lived with big maps, it was difficult to realise the size of the areas covered by the nurses and the difficulties of dealing with them. The ordinary beat of a nurse in Western Canada was 250 miles.

Western Australia had appealed, not in vain, for the help of the emissaries of the Association,

and Africa—West, East and South—Ceylon, British Guiana and Hong Kong had had occasion to sing their praises.

The Schools of Tropical Medicine had done excellent service in establishing training courses for nurses, through which they could learn something of the exotic diseases with which they would subsequently have to deal. These schools of medical research owed much to his distinguished predecessor at the Colonial Office, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and to a distinguished medical man, Sir Patrick Manson. They were invaluable as a training ground for doctors and nurses. The public had little active knowledge of these diseases, which were daily incidents, and provided the night work of the nurses of the Association, amongst which malaria, sleeping sickness, black-water fever and smallpox were some of the most usual.

West Africa, in the minds of the public, was scarcely a health resort, but in the last decade the mortality rate had been enormously reduced, and that of those invalided home from 56 to 25 per cent. That was a splendid result, in which the care exercised by the nurses was a direct factor, in addition to a better mode of life. Who could tell how much a little kindly advice on the part of nurses had contributed to this.

The semi-civilised conditions under which much of the work of the nurses had to be performed added much to the difficulty of keeping up the supply to the standard required, but it was encouraging to note that during the last twelve months only four had come upon the sick fund. It was a hopeful indication, and an encouraging result.

It was a touching tribute to the work of the nurses and to the care exercised in their selection that from the highest to the lowest—from Governors to the humblest clerks—came the same expressions of thanks for their services. In the great solitudes of distant lands, in many a lonely outpost of Empire, the presence of the nurses was the daylight of humanity, and their voices the music of the world.

Mr. Harcourt's speech was at the beginning punctuated by questions from members of the audience as to why the Parliamentary franchise should not be extended to women who had shown themselves capable of such splendid service. We refrain from criticising the methods of those who make these protests for conscience sake. Certainly their logic was irrefutable.

Lord Inverclyde, seconding the adoption of the Report, said that to those in Scotland the work of the Association appealed very strongly, as emigration was so large. Mr. Harcourt had spoken of the extent of the work of the Association. At home we thought in acres, in the Colonies in miles. The Association was worthy of all support.

Sir Walter Egerton, who moved the election of the Council, Executive Committee, and hon. officers, appealed to the relatives of those abroad to realise the importance of the work done by the nurses of the United Kingdom, and to give it

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