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EDITORIAL.

THE CHAMPIONS OF LIFE.

The suggestion of Dr. Saleeby that the memorial to Lord Lister should be a living one is worthy of a distinguished and enthusiastic disciple of "the great champion of life." Dr. Saleeby urges the foundation of a Listerian Institute of men and women, doctors and nurses, who should be called after this great man, and should be available to give Listerian direction to every mother of our race as long as the race endures.

He also in a recent lecture, speaking of the triumphs of antiseptic surgery, which he described as "man's mastery over microbes"—which in old time surgery more often than not brought septic poisoning and death—pointed out that the Japanese triumphed in the Russo-Japanese war because of Listerism. At the same time he said, in relation to the Boer war, that our record in South Africa was a disgrace to the nation that produced Lord Lister and the great sanitary pioneers of the last century.

Going on to speak of the horrors of the Balkan campaign, and the appalling inadequacy of the hospital arrangements, he said that practically the whole of the Turkish wounded were left on the field of battle, and if the crows, and an animal, half-wolf, half-dog, did not finish them as they lay, then the Bulgarian Red Cross might do their best.

It is inconceivable, knowing these things, and that within a few days' journey of this country, as the daily papers reveal, men are dying, not only from their wounds in their thousands, but from gangrene, smallpox, cholera and typhus, that the British Red Cross Society has not only allowed the Red Crescent Society to be first in sending out trained women nurses to the seat of war, but it has so far taken no initiative to provide such help for the sick.

Any hospital committee at home which attempted to provide for the care of the sick without organising a nursing department, including thoroughly trained women nurses and administrators, would be universally condemned as absolutely incompetent to deal with the matter at all. Yet in time of war the need is not less but greater, for everything is in a state of chaos, and the necessity for supplementing sanitary supervision, expert medical knowledge, and surgical skill, with the healing and comforting art of nursing is imperative.

In this connection we very much fear that the reorganization of the British Red Cross Society is by no means complete. It has for years been a by-word for reaction and incompetence in times of emergency, and, in the name of the nursing profession, we call upon those responsible for its organisation to supplement its present committee of medical and social members by placing upon it some expert nurse-administrators, who will be able to inspire it with some sense of its responsibility in connection with the nursing of the sick.

The Americans have given us an excellent lead in Red Cross work: to judge by recent reports, not only in times of war, but in national crises and times of calamity, the American Red Cross is well to the fore. We wonder how much the fact that Miss Jane A. Delano, Registered Nurse, late Superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps of the United States, is Chairman of the Red Cross National Committee on Nursing Service, has to do with this splendid record of humanitarian work.

Doctors and nurses at such crises as these stand forth as the champions of life. The British Red Cross Society has provided medical treatment, much of which will be labour lost unless supplemented by the essential aid of trained nursing.

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previous page

next page