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EDITORIAL.

THE RED CROSS.

"Lest we forget" let us—at this appropriate time—recall the name and work of a great reformer, and one to whom the world at war owes so much. It is to Henri Durrant, a Swiss gentleman, that the Red Cross owes its inception. For some centuries, medical officers have been attached to armies in the field, and their services were deemed sufficient for all requirements. Florence Nightingale's mission in the Crimean war was the great innovation which roused the public from their apathy and ignorance to a realization of the misery suffered by sick and wounded soldiers without organized nursing. Notwithstanding the object lesson given, when the war of Italian independence broke out in 1859, the armies in the field were just as ill-equipped for the care of the sick and wounded as before. In the bloody battle of Solferino, when nearly 40,000 men were killed, Durrant served as a volunteer nurse, and the suffering he witnessed so affected him, that he was filled with an impelling desire to ease the burden of suffering in the future. He embodied his experiences in a pamphlet: "Souvenir de Solferino," which he published when the war was over. It was translated into many languages, and largely read and discussed. The Geneva Society of Public Utility invited M. Durrant later to submit some definite proposition. More than one meeting was held under the auspices of this Society. A Committee was appointed to start the work of organisation, which resulted in the International Congress being held in Geneva, in 1863, at which 14 countries were represented.

In the following year another Congress took place, the outcome of which was the famous Geneva Convention. The Articles provided for the neutrality of all hospitals,

their personnel and equipment. It was not without much devoted work that Durrant roused the Governments of many European countries. Neutrality connotes impartiality, and it was laid down that members of the Society should be ready to serve all needing their succour, either friend or foe. We are all familiar with the red cross on a white field—the insignia of the Red Cross Society. It is the flag of the Swiss nation reversed, and it was a graceful compliment to the Reformer to adopt it. All civilized nations have joined this International Bond now; and who shall tell the sum of suffering eased and prevented, and the lives saved by its inestimable work. Henri Durrant passed away five or six years ago. We can but be thankful that the great philanthropist did not live to see the day, when Germany, from whom he had received some of his greatest encouragement, should have so outraged humanity as to treat the sacred Geneva Convention as another "*scrap of paper*."

The sight of unrelieved suffering on the battle-field would have been less of a shock to the tender-hearted man than the deliberate murder of the wounded and those ministering to them, by a barbarous foe solemnly pledged to succour them if needful. The cross has ever been an emblem of suffering in Christendom, but also an insignia of the *relief* of suffering. We know that both the Sisters and the Brothers of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (the Brothers were the Knights Hospitallers), founded for the benefit of the sick pilgrims and wounded soldiers, in the time of the crusades, wore the beautiful eight-pointed white cross on their black habits; the points being symbolic of the eight beatitudes. At the same period there were the Knights Templars, who wore a red cross on the shoulder, and were styled the "Knights of the Red Cross." Their duties were to protect the pilgrims to and from the Holy Land.

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