

THE NURSES' MISSIONARY LEAGUE.

The Nurses' Missionary League opened its all day gatherings at University Hall on Wednesday with a "Demonstration Study Circle," which illustrated the method of Bible study being used in various Hospital branches. It was a truly "Hospital" circle, all the members being nurses in uniform, two of whom had written brief papers, while all had come with some ideas to contribute to the discussion on the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. The demonstration was listened to with great interest by a room full of nurses.

The day's gatherings were typical of the world-wide influence of the League. Over a dozen missionary members on furlough were present from stations in Africa, China, India, Palestine and the Gilbert Islands. The addresses showed vividly how varied is the work of a nurse in different parts of the mission field. Miss Hope and Miss Haward spoke about China. The former, who has been Matron of a women's hospital in an up-country station, Hinghwa, told of the two Chinese women whom she has now trained to the stage of head-nurse, and of two others who have nearly finished their course; but pointed out that in the men's hospital public opinion will not yet allow of a woman being in charge. Miss Haward, on the other hand, has spent much of her time in training Chinese men nurses in a modern up-to-date hospital in Peking. She described conditions five years ago when a nurse was often found lying asleep on an empty bed, and the day nurses would come on duty with books under their arms and settle down for a nice read before tidying the ward! After regular daily classes in anatomy, physiology &c., six of Miss Haward's pupils last year passed the final examinations of the Nurses' Association of China (almost as high in standard as any Hospital examinations in England).

India was also represented by two nurses of widely different experience. Mrs. Starr spoke about the work on the Afghan frontier, showing the opportunities for breaking down fear and superstition, for building up a new position for women, for instilling new ideas on the value of human life and of cleanliness and hygiene. As illustrating the conditions she told of mothers who, during the first few days of their child's life always carry about a knife to ward off the evil spirits; of girls bought and sold by their husbands; of the charm "guaranteed to cure discharging eyes" worn round the neck of a baby whose eyes were pouring pus. By contrast, she told of the tremendous influence of the medical mission hospitals dotted along the frontier, an influence penetrating where no European may travel. Miss Feare came from a little village hospital in South India. She pictured vividly the poverty, ignorance, and practical serfdom of the thousands of outcasts, told of the mass movement towards Christianity and the tremendous things that Christian influence and education have done. As examples she told of some of these outcasts now trained as nurses, and "managing somehow

to carry on in my absence," and of the young men now able to act as house-surgeons in the hospital. Different as were the circumstances of these speakers, their plea was the same: "*We are handicapped on every side for lack of workers.*"

The urgent need for more workers was emphasised by Dr. E. N. Cook, of Uganda, who mentioned that his Society (the C.M.S.) has five hospitals in India closed for lack of nursing staff, and is appealing for fifty nurses to fill gaps and to open up new work. He described three different types of nursing posts in Uganda. (1) In a well-established centre such as Mengo, with fully-equipped hospital, with branch dispensaries in the neighbouring villages, and with maternity and child-welfare centres. The need for the latter is urgent, as two children in every three die within a week of birth, as compared with one in seven in England. (2) In the country districts away from the capital where the nurse would be in charge of dispensary and itinerating work. (3) In new places where pioneer work is waiting to be done. Dr. Cook spoke of the tremendous interest of the medical work, with its various tropical diseases, and described the fight against sleeping sickness, the clearing of the natives away from the islands infested by the tse-tse fly, the stamping out of the fly's breeding-places (the undergrowth) by herds of antelopes, the cures effected by injections of a preparation of arsenic and the present experiments in allowing the natives to return to their old haunts. It was indeed a romantic story of the medical warfare against disease.

The report of the Nurses' Missionary League, passed at the evening meeting, told of encouraging progress, of nurses volunteering for missionary work, of 45 members who have sailed during the year, of opportunities in the home hospitals. In spite of all this, the leaders are, as Miss Richardson said, "filled with divine discontent," in view of the many vacant posts abroad. She quoted some arresting figures from the report; the total number of British missionary nurses in the whole mission field is 359, whereas the nursing staff of the London Hospital is 486, of St. Bartholomew's 323, of Guy's 300—a total for three hospitals of 1,109.

In a most inspiring and thoughtful closing address, the Rev. E. Shillito spoke of the purpose of God, which can only be fulfilled through the willing service of men and women who will work to win back the world to Him.

TRAINED WOMEN NURSES' FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

The Annual General Meeting of the above Society will be held at 431, Oxford Street, W. 1, on May 26th, at 5 p.m. It is hoped members will try to attend and take an interest in their own business. The Society has saved upwards of £5,500, a proof of good management by nurses for nurses, which should be an encouragement to them to manage their own financial affairs, and not leave them to be managed by outsiders. All the paid officials are women.

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