

Royal British Nurses' Association.

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THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

A NEW IMPULSE IN EDUCATION.

Councillor Beatrice Kent took the chair last Saturday, when Miss Good, M.R.B.N.A., gave her address at 194, Queen's Gate, S.W., on "A New Impulse in Education." There was a good attendance of Members of the Corporation and others. Councillor Kent said that it gave her great pleasure to preside on this occasion, for the subject of the lecture was connected with matters about which people knew too little, and on which they were apt to think less. It behoved everyone to give attention to new ideas; great very often was the force of an idea, and the most fertile ground in which to sow new ideas was the plastic mind of the growing child.

Miss Good, at the commencement of her lecture, spoke of the inspiration which it had been to her to visit, during the summer, a great new centre of religious and educational thought at Dornach, where teachers from all parts of the world had congregated to study educational methods as based on spiritual science. For many years, she said, we had studied matter from the standpoint of natural science—it was right that we should, it was necessary even to the evolution of the human mind, but the time had come when one ought to study religion also from a scientific aspect but one still full of reverence.

Referring to the science of mental growth, Miss Good raised the question of why we meet with so many people inwardly broken. In everyday life one constantly met people whose very minds seemed paralysed by the fear that life's tasks might prove too great for them. We have heard of the increase in the number of people entering asylums, we know well that nerve cases are on the increase, and there are many indications of a want of proper balance in human life generally, at the present time.

Dr. Rudolf Steiner turned his attention years ago to the necessity for changing this condition of things, and, as a result of his observation and research, he came very strongly to hold the opinion that some scheme must be devised whereby the education of children must assume a more rational, and, at the same time, a more spiritual and less materialistic form. He established schools with the purpose of putting his ideas of the education of children into practice. Miss Good said that she had visited one of these schools and she had been

both astonished and delighted. Never had she seen children so beautiful, so healthy, and so happy. Their every movement was graceful, and they were so perfectly formed, so intelligent, that one was driven to enquire into the environment in which they lived and the kind of education given to them.

At birth a child might almost be said to be a spiritual being, but its spirituality decreases as time goes on. It had to work to put its physical body on a proper basis, and until this was accomplished its spiritual powers should not be diverted to other purposes. Now, said the lecturer, there is really only one means through which you can educate a child during his early life. His feelings are not properly developed, his will-power is not established, but he has an enormous faculty for imitation, and by working on this faculty, you can not only educate the child, but you can foster the establishment of will-power. During the first seven years of his life the child should be surrounded, as far as possible, by things of beauty and by all the beautiful sounds in nature. We should try to guide him by beautiful example rather than by forcibly controlling his slowly evolving will-power. At Dornach there are adopted methods of cultivating this slowly growing will-power and of bending it towards the beautiful. One of these is by what is known as eurythmie, but it is not the ordinary eurythmic exercises which are taught in this country, and neither is it in any sense a form of gymnastics. The child is taught to bring all the most beautiful feelings into the movements of this eurythmie, actually to express by means of eurythmie those fine feelings; and, said the lecturer, "I wish you could see the beauty of all this and its obvious effect upon the children."

In the second period of life—from about seven to fourteen—feeling becomes strongly developed, although, of course, the imitative faculty does not suddenly nor wholly disappear. During the second period advantage is taken at Dornach of the development of feeling to make the child acquainted with such subjects as history, allegory, folklore, and others, while all the beautiful facts in nature are explained to him. But through all it is never forgotten that the personality of the teacher is a matter of great importance; it must be such as to fill the child with a genuine love and respect. If the teacher has this respect from the child, and he can inculcate certain teaching of the pure and the

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