

## NURSING IN RUSSIA.

Captain Alex Ilovaisky has kindly supplied us with a copy of the interesting paper which he read on April 4th at the recent Nursing Conference at the Central Hall, Westminster, from which we print extracts. We venture to think that "A Study in Race Development" would be a more appropriate name for the paper.

Captain Ilovaisky writes:—

You will in all probability admit that of all the consecutive phases of our physical existence, of all the successive stages of our average "duration," it is the preparatory or nursing period which is the most in need of our love, solicitude and care.

In the words of your greatest and most glorious mystic, "the child shows the man like morning shows the day," and it rests entirely with you to enrich and enliven that morning, thus preventing the clouds from disturbing its splendour, and ensuring its end to be known as "the end of a perfect day."

Long before recollection, farther back than the oldest civilization, yet revealed to the knowledge of modern men, this instance of reproduction, or positive motherhood, was the axis, the only revolving axis of women's strivings, interests and fears.

A slave, an instrument of delight, a timid barbaric figure, she was ever prepared to rear, preserve, and steadily beautify, rebelling against the law, and imposing the striking rule that, as a climax of sex antagonism, men use their strength to kill, and women to give birth.

In China, Sparta, Egypt, wherever low and obscure designs were blending to set up a tyranny of numeric limitation, dangerously overtaxing the strength of a genuine constitution rarely sufficiently matured, and reverting to a spasmodic increase in the scale of ordinary birth rate in a case of military requirements, they were fighting them on their ground by repeating the art of exercised fascination.

With the introduction of metals, colours, luxury and refinement, with the exotic growth of this "lasting civilization," which, if given a proper chance, an elephant might easily have outlived—but which nevertheless paralysed and distorted the universality of the biological process as reflected in the course of animal evolution, they contented themselves to satiate the regions most suitable through their climate to the growth and expanse of the human race.

In those days there was no Christianity, but the bedrock of its original conception, the belief in a promising after-life were propelling the imagination of those who were born given power and breeding wealth.

As a consequence our world entered into an era of dangerous misconception, when, according to Emerson, "death had precedence over life," every man was an embalmer or an undertaker, and the one who is now a millionaire was described as a pyramidaire.

Inbreeding of the type commonly associated

with the names of Cleopatra, Arsinos, the House of Castile, and the Royal line of Siam, and other less prominent abnormalities, led to a speedy, wholesale and intensive degeneration. It led the way, nature contenting herself to submit to the fancy of a depraved and cruel imagination fed on the contemplation of duties erected by human hands in a spasm of delirious obliteration.

In a hundred and fifty years of Egyptian supremacy in all spheres of human interests and activities the female figure had shrivelled into a hard, broad-shouldered, narrow-hipped and mawkky form, lowering birth-rate down to a figure incompatible with sustenance.

Bursting into existence, the Greek repelled this nightmare, this unnatural limitation; drove away the embalmer, and restored proportion, size and fertility to par.

Independently of this alternative conception of a primary undertaking, this ebb and flow in a natural generation, the whole of mankind was being affected by a deep and widespread physiological anarchism. "As modern science—biological, sociological, and anthropological—maintains, and as the ancient Hindu Puranas invariably teach, when a man became a thinking being he began to misuse his creative force, and as instinct receded, and freewill began to manifest itself in the individual, the sex function was degraded into a mere means of sexual gratification, and through countless millenniums enormously overused. In this way, by dispensing much of the vital energy indispensable to this process, he weakened his body and made it unfit to survive" (Frederick Finch Strong, M.D.).

Basing ourselves on this finding, on this product of historical observation, we may naturally look with suspicion on the spreading of a doctrine of national birth control, inevitably leading to an increase in the frequency of physical association and favouring a result of disastrous magnanimity—we may ponder where in all this philosophy, too practical to be harmless, ends the spirit of Heidelberg and begins the method of Chinatown.

As time went on, and the world entered into a new epoch, based on the religion of Judæa, the philosophy of the Greek and the legislation of Rome, a new spirit, a wave of dematerialisation concurred, with the strengthening of the spirit, to dethrone the majesty of the flesh.

Down till the sixteenth century, to the reasoned consecration of a splendid Renaissance, mankind had little, if any, knowledge of the constructions, functions, and requirements of the body, more than was known to both Galen and Hippocrates.

The breath of Protestantism, the work of Erasmus, Reclin, and Ulrich von Guther, when crowned by the mastery of Spinoza, led to a new, more careful study of this mystery of creation. In an inspired attempt to replace the objects of immediate adoration, Titian, Rubens, and Veronese began to paint the earth, the child, the woman, in a style of gorgeous splendour.

Woman's life was secluded; if the world was the prison of mankind, her's was a little and

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