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EDITORIAL.

THE PLACE OF THE MISSIONARY NURSE AS AN EDUCATOR.

At the recent Conference of the International Council of Nurses at Copenhagen Professor Isabel Stewart, of Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, drew attention to the conspicuous contribution of missionary nurses to the training of nurses. It is unquestionably true that to the farthest bounds of Empire, and beyond in foreign countries, missionary nurses have been pioneers in this connection. When railroads in Central Africa were unknown they were at work on the shores of Lake Nyasa; in India, in Thibet, in Corea, in the far north and the far south of the great American Continent, they have demonstrated that the Great Commission given to the Church of Christ on earth was not only to preach the Gospel but to heal the sick, and they have enlisted in this service the people of the countries in which they work, training them in habits of routine and order which are so hard a discipline to races which have never before practised them, and teaching them the technical side of nursing work, in which numbers of native races often develop a wonderful facility. It is not surprising if the reliability, initiative, self-forgetfulness, and other qualities which go to the making of a good nurse in addition to technical proficiency, are products of slower growth.

Perhaps the most striking instance of the development of nurse-training by missionary nurses is to be found in their work in and for China, as will be seen in the Report which we publish on page 138, in which Miss Cora E. Simpson states:—

“Modern nursing in China is of recent origin, was started, brought to the present state of development, and is still in the hands of Missionary nurses. This is the one country

in the world where Christian nurses were free to establish ideals and carry them to a full fruition unhampered. In just ten years' time the scattered groups of nurses were organised, had put over a programme for the registration of schools, uniform curriculum, National diploma and examination, established a Journal of Nursing, built up a great Association with her own graduates, received into full membership, made themselves a National power, and brought the work of nurses from 'no word in the language for nurse' to the Association's full membership in the International Council of Nurses, which is a record unsurpassed by any Nurses' Association in the world. This record demands the world's tribute to the work the Missionary nurses have been quietly doing in the past dozen years.”

The seed sown in China has no doubt fallen on fruitful soil, for China is one of the most intellectual of the nations of the world, while the manual dexterity and artistic feeling of her people are evidenced in her beautiful works of art, in porcelain, in silks, and priceless embroideries, which are universally admired and desired, but cannot be reproduced by hands clumsier than those which have won for China an undying fame. The foundation upon which to develop nursing on a very high level is thus a part of the heritage of Chinese men and women.

When, therefore, we speak of the development of nurse training throughout the world do not let us forget how much that development has been stimulated by missionary nurses, who devotedly, unselfishly, and with heroic courage are, by precept and practice, demonstrating to nations where the word “nurse” was a short time since unknown, the ideals of which the true nurse is the living embodiment.

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