

THE PROGRESS OF THE NURSING PROFESSION IN CHINA.

GRADUATION DAY AT THE UNION HOSPITAL, HANKOW.

Miss Gladys E. Stephenson, S.R.N., F.B.C.N., Principal of the Nursing School of the Union Hospital, Hankow, China, writes:—

"We had a glorious graduation ceremony last week, as it was the largest class of nurses graduating from any hospital in China. I thought you would like a report of it for the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING*.

We have just received news that our Mission has granted two-thirds of the cost of an educational building for the nurses, we here have to raise one-third. The nurses are enthusiastic about it and together we hope to do it.

I hope that the building will be up before I go on furlough next year (1932, autumn) and I'm looking forward to the Congress of the International Council of Nurses in 1933.

I do wish I could have shared in the History of Nursing dinner. I shall be eager to read the report of it.

The Nurses' Association has just published a book on biological nursing, which Mr. James Liu helped me to translate, and when he returns I hope to start on a translation of "A History of Nursing."

I hope you met Mr. Liu when he was in London. He won golden opinions for himself during his year at Bellevue Hospital in New York."

Miss Stephenson's Report is as follows:—

THE GRADUATION CEREMONY.

After days of heavy rain, a fine evening, on May 12th, found the streets of Hankow very full of people. Clustered around the gates of the Taiping Road Church, of the Church of Christ in China, was a curious crowd of sightseers gazing at the numbers of white-robed Nurses in uniform forming into a procession in the Chapel yard.

It was the occasion of the Hankow Union School of Nursing Graduation Ceremony. The Church was beautifully decorated, the embroideries, scrolls, huge pots of marguerites in shining brass bowls and coloured electric lights made a delightful setting for the nurses in their uniforms.

After the congregation was seated, and the speakers had taken their places on the platform, the Nurses' procession came up the aisle to the strains of the Crusaders' March, the graduating class in the forefront, more than thirty of them, led by the Principal of the School. About eighty student Nurses followed, then came the Sisters, and the Medical staff brought up the rear.

The service began with the singing of the Nurses' hymn, "Gracious Spirit, dwell with me," the Church choir being accompanied by four violins. The opening prayer gave thanks for the life of Florence Nightingale whose birthday we were thus celebrating, and whose life had brought such blessing to the sick and afflicted the world over.

The Chairman, the Rev. H. B. Rattenbury, B.A., spoke of memories of Dr. Griffith John, and his emphasis on the evangelistic value of all forms of Christian service, healing and teaching, as well as preaching. He went on to tell of the early dreams of a united medical work in the "Chicago of China," this great city of Hankow.

Nine years or so ago a group of missionaries had met and talked together in the garden of the China Inland Mission, and there, that day, the Union was really born, said the speaker.

While much remained to be done before the full vision should be realised, very much had already come to pass. The new hospital was an accomplished fact, its work was

becoming widely recognised and appreciated, and already it was preparing workers for China in good numbers.

The present School of Nursing is a union of four smaller schools, the Hodge Memorial School of Nursing, the Jubilee Women's Hospital, and the London Mission Men's and Women's Hospitals. Before the days of the Union the four schools had graduated a total of twenty-three Nurses, while in three years since the Union School of Nursing came into being over sixty had graduated and gone out over China with their skilled services.

The principal then gave a Report of the Graduating Class giving the numbers from the different departments of the Union and pointing out that they were all baptized Christians and members of the Christian Church.

The Report also mentioned the country hospitals which were affiliated with the Union School of Nursing, the nurses of which came to Hankow for further experience and preparation for final examination. Eight of these had won their diplomas this year.

The Graduating Class then sang a song in English expressing their hope that they might ever have a high ideal and be a credit to their Nursing School and honour to their Church.

The diplomas were then presented by a well-known Chinese lady, Mrs. T. C. Cheng, the thirteen honour students receiving theirs first.

Then came the most solemn moment of the service, when the nurses with their diplomas in their hands, repeated the Florence Nightingale Pledge, the congregation standing meanwhile.

Florence Nightingale Pledge.

"I hereby pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly to pass my life in purity and to practise my profession faithfully. I will refrain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous and will not take or knowingly give any harmful drug.

"I will do all in my power to elevate the standard of my profession and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my profession. With loyalty will I aid the physician in his work and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care."

After this, Dean Mary Kwei (of the Central China University) delivered a very practical and inspiring address, based on the main points of the Pledge that the nurses had just taken.

A surprise came when a member of the Church presented a beautiful silver shield to the Class in remembrance of this happy occasion.

Miss Mabel Chang, one of the class, then made a short speech of thanks and appreciation.

The music was much enjoyed, particularly the solo finely rendered by Miss Winifred Brown, "Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee."

All were conscious of the inspiration of the service and felt that it marked an epoch in the life of the newly established Union's medical and nursing work. After three years from the day of opening, it gave pause to look back, and see how marvellously God had helped us to overcome the initial difficulties and how greatly He was blessing the work in its continuance.

It also gave a clear picture of the rapid progress of the Nursing Profession in China. In the prayer, before the Benediction was pronounced, the Chairman gave thanks for "what our eyes have seen and our ears have heard." Ten short years ago no one could have imagined such progress, and though China is still torn with difficulty and unrest, the Nursing Profession continues to make steady and rapid progress.

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