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LECTURES.

THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY.

By DR. BURNETT RAE.

Dr. Burnett Rae, who recently gave a most interesting lecture at the Headquarters of the Royal British Nurses' Association said, in commencing, it was only in recent years that people had come to a realisation of the influence of the mind upon health, that it was so powerful as is now believed was an idea not entertained some short time ago. He could remember one of his patients, a professor and senior wrangler, who was only content with treatment that meant "a pill or a potion"; he was quite incredulous that any other could be productive of cure. Dr. Rae referred to the influences working through the voluntary nervous system but said that the effects working through the sympathetic nervous system were equally if not more important; the latter is not under control of the will and it is particularly sensitive to emotional influences especially in the case of children. Health can be attained in very great measure by right thought, although it is a fact that even from birth we may all have our individual tendencies towards good health or ill; in that connection we may say that we are given our hand for life and it is for us to play it out to the best result possible. Fear and anxiety working on that part of the brain which controls the nervous system gives rise to influences felt throughout the whole body. Dr. Rae spoke in this connection of the attainment of control through the medium of the will; through the development of the will a person ceases to be a mere creature of impulse. By the power of the will fear can be kept in check and, from the point of view of health, it is important that it should be, for fear is one of the factors most productive of ill health. Certain scientific facts and observations were related to indicate the actual results of fear in its effect upon the muscles and certain other of the bodily organs. Dr. Rae held that even surgical shock was probably far more closely related to fear than any other circumstance. Some part of the brain keeps an awareness and makes its responses and demands thus setting up a kind of vicious circle; many a mental influence in the unconscious mind reacts upon the physical body.

The lecturer next proceeded to analyse the psychology of faith. A thing he said may sometimes have all the force and effect of reality even although the thing in itself has none and if we learn to meet fear with faith the effect is often wonderful. Pythagoras says: "Be a man's faith true or false it will achieve wonders," but faith must be responsible, suggestion must be responsible. Get the imagination of your patient set in a right direction and a true, but don't let reason imprison faith. There is an intellectualism of the heart as well as of the head and the former often counts for a great deal.

Do not think of boundaries to experience, and remember that intuition of the heart is just as sound as intuition of

the brain but the two must be complementary and not conflicting.

Continuing, Dr. Rae said that it is difficult at times to say wherein is the good, the true, and the beautiful in the various aspects and conditions of life and much lies in the attitude of mind which a person adopts and upon his way of seeing things. Newton and Newton's dog Diamond might have the same anatomical structure of the eye but they saw things in widely different aspects. If we are tired or toxic we see the dark side of things or get distorted images of them into the mind, the premises upon which we build are falsified. We do not see things in their perspective as a whole and wholeness means health of vision as well as health of body.

Miss Kathleen Smith, Matron of the West End Hospital for Nervous Diseases, who presided, thanked Dr. Rae very warmly for the pleasure he had given to the audience and, on an invitation to ask questions, a good deal of discussion arose.

LANTERN LECTURE ON SPAIN.

Towards the close of the year we had a very interesting lecture with lantern views by Miss Jessie Holmes, dealing with her visit to Spain last summer. She put on the screen many scenes which, with her descriptions, led us all to wish that we too might yet have opportunity to see something of this land so rich in historical tradition and great artistic treasure. Descriptions and pictures of the Escorial were particularly interesting. This immense palace was built by the Emperor monk, Philip II, and so large is it that, if you resolved to make a tour of every room in the palace, you would have to resign yourself to a twelve-miles walk. Pictures of splendid tapestries, frescoes, pictures and sculpture were put on the screen and the architectural beauties of different parts of the building were indicated by other pictures.

Miss Holmes described to us scenes in Madrid, Castile, Granada and other parts, and every one agreed that she had indeed given us a pleasant and interesting after-dinner entertainment and had enhanced our knowledge of beauty and art in Spain, a country which of late years has attracted many travellers.

FIXTURES.

The following fixtures have been arranged. On Wednesday, February 6th, "The Ramblers" will go over the Guildhall. We shall meet there at 2.15 p.m., but, if possible, we should be glad if those who wish to join us will send us a postcard to this effect. For Thursday, February 14th, we have arranged a whist drive at 8 p.m., and on Thursday, February 21st, we are to have a lantern lecture on "The History and Romance of Tea," by Mrs. Lidderdale. On Thursday, February 28th, at 3 p.m., Miss Macdonald will lecture on St. Louise de Marillac (Mlle. le Gras). The artistic occupational therapy classes are held at 2.30 p.m. on Mondays. For particulars write to the Secretary.

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