

Miss Saunby, Miss Noordyk and Miss Nowroji be asked to serve on this Committee.

Florence Nightingale Executive Committee. Miss Sutherland proposed and Miss Tomkinson seconded the motion that Miss Noordyk be elected to serve on this Committee.

A RESOLUTION WAS PASSED GIVING TWO YEARS' GRACE in which the Nurses of Mysore, Hyderabad and Ceylon who had less than three years' training might become members of the T.N.A.I. The two years to date from November 1938 to November 1940.

A letter was read from Mrs. Moriera, Secretary of the Ceylon Nurses Association and a unanimous Resolution was passed in which it was decided to offer her honorary membership in the T.N.A.I.

Votes of Thanks. Miss Chadwick in closing the Final Business Session of Conference proposed a hearty vote of thanks to

His Highness the Maharaja and his Government for their grant of Rs. 500 towards expenses, for their help in placing houses at the disposal of the delegates.

His Highness the Maharaja for so graciously inviting the delegates to Tea at Lalitha Mahal.

His Highness the Yuvaraja of Mysore and Prince Jayachamrajendra Wadiyar for opening the Conference.

The Dewan of Mysore.

Sir Chas. Todhunter and Lady Todhunter

The Huzur Secretary.

Mr. M.A. Sreenivasan, the President of the Municipality.

Rev. H.H. Newham and Mrs. Newham.

J. F. Robinson, F.R.C.S.

Dr. Jayaram.

Dr. S. Misra, F.R.C.S.

Drs. Captain and Gillespie.

Mrs. Rollo, Miss Coombs, and Miss Frodsham for judging exhibits.

The Overseer at Brindavan, Mr. Sheshagiri Rao for turning on the lights.

The Overseers of the Vani Vilas Water Works.

The Bus Proprietors, The Press, The Caterers.

Peons, Servants, Coolies and all those who had helped in any way to make the Conference a success.

At 2-30 p.m. The delegates set out on a sight seeing tour to Seringapatam. Tea was served at the Daria Dowlat by kind permission of the Huzur Secretary, and after tea the delegates left for Krishnaraja Sagara, returning to Mysore in time for dinner, for which a special menu had been prepared by the caterers, Messrs. Funnell and Co., of Bangalore.

THE WORK OF 'THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORAL AND SOCIAL HYGIENE'

*Paper read at the T.N.A.I. Conference, Mysore, November 9th, 1938
by Miss E. M. TOMKINSON*

I have been asked to speak this afternoon on the work of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene. My first word must be one of apology for consenting to occupy this position. The subject is such a vast and important one, I feel that someone far more competent than I am, should have been chosen. But I do speak from the conviction that the work of the Association should have the earnest consideration and practical support of the members of this Conference.

I was brought in touch with the need of carrying out the Aims of the A.M.S.H. through the work in many departments of our hospital but chiefly through the tragic waste of life that we saw in the V. D. wards. 'God created man in His own image, and in the image of God created He him,' but it seemed as if this form was almost completely effaced in the bodies of the people we saw there,—God's creation in ruins! Month after month treatment would be given that repaired this destruction. The patients were discharged, only to return again, or to be heard of, in the same diseased condition, sometimes with symptoms doubly pronounced. What a waste of time, treatment and energy on the part of the hospital staff. Is it any use? Is it right to spend our time and money in such an unfruitful field? Such were the questions that were constantly arising in our minds.

In speaking of this experience, I know that I am but voicing the thoughts of perhaps all doctors and nurses.

For sometime we visited the houses of ill-fame in Mysore and this gave us a vivid and heart-breaking knowledge of the environment from which some of these patients came and to which they returned.

As we tried to think through this mountainous problem, we realised that we were only tackling one part of a three-fold need and as this was the middle one, it was perhaps the least effective. We treated these peoples' physical conditions and gave little or no attention to the mental disease which had deprived them of all WILL-STRENGTH to carry out the better desires that had come to them as their bodily sufferings were being relieved. We realised that 'A Hospital' was not the only place that was necessary for this remedial work, but 'A Home' in the richest sense of the word, where mind and body alike could receive all the sympathy, love and discipline that is necessary to restore self-respect and a desire to become once more a worthy citizen.

Many people have quite a mistaken idea of what the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene really stands for. When the title is mentioned it would appear that their minds become immediately filled with a mental picture of people who have sunk so low into sin, that to even think of such degradation makes them shudder and abhor the whole subject. We know that this Association has to face a very dark and gloomy side of life, but even if this occupied the major portion of its thought, should we as nurses be justified in ignoring it, just because it is thought to be too repulsive to think about?

Satisfaction in our profession reaches the highest water-mark, when we have been able to nurse back to full health and strength a patient who for some weeks has been very near to death. The greater the struggle the bigger is our joy and anything that we can do to prevent other people from suffering in the same way, we welcome with eagerness and gratitude.

Surely this idea should permeate our thought with regard to people who are infected with venereal disease, and should make us co-workers together, with all those who seek to abolish this disease, that perhaps causes more suffering in the world than any other affliction.

Everyone who is engaged in any kind of social up-lift work to-day, realises as never before, the necessity of building on preventive foundations and it is to this aspect of the work that the A.M.S.H. gives such a great part of its attention. Because the Association is International in its outlook, and purely non-sectarian in its activities it can unite all social workers in the one AIM of giving to all people the RIGHTS of real humanity.

Big reforms in all ages have been gained through steady and hard fighting which has often been accompanied by severe persecution. It was because Florence Nightingale had the God-given insight, determination and will-power (in spite of physical suffering) that we stand today as

members of one of the most sacred, dignified and honourable professions. As we think of the long hard fight that she endured, we couple with her name that of Josephine Butler. Though her struggle was in a somewhat different field, their work was so complimentary that we, as nurses, cannot be true to our Founder, Florence Nightingale, without associating with her great and worthy aims those of Josephine Butler. These women have proved themselves to be the greatest sisters that humanity has known.

The T.N.A.I. has recently added to its labours that of the A.M.S.H. work and by so doing, it is helping to perfect its own work. To have shirked this responsibility would have made our service incomplete, and in some paths, as we have learnt from bitter experience, ineffectual.

What are the Aims and Objects of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene.

OBJECTS.—The objects of the Association shall be to promote the principles of the International Abolitionist Federation (of which the Association is the British Branch), to raise the standard of character and conduct in sexual relations, to secure the recognition of an equal standard of morality for men and women, and to eradicate prostitution and kindred evils. It will oppose and seek to overthrow all forms of official regulation and commercial exploitation of vice, and it will endeavour to study and promote such legislative, administrative, social, educational and hygienic reforms as will tend to encourage the highest public and private morality.

Anyone who will carefully study and then try to carry out through practice and teaching these aims, will realise that their task is not surrounded by ALL that is drab and sordid, but that the foundation of its object, is based on the most wonderful thing in the world, viz. the maintenance of abundant healthy life, which should be continually created in God's WAY through the sanctity of the family.

The Nursing service in its varied branches has perhaps greater opportunities than any other profession in carrying this preventive teaching to all classes and ages of people. As hospital workers, private nurses, health visitors, and midwives we come into contact with those who have the marks of this disease upon them. Imagine the transformation that there would be in the Gynecological, Septic-maternity, and Children's wards, if this preventive work had been carried out during the past century. In the Out-patient department and on the District the number of sad stories of sterility and frequent abortions would be reduced by about 80 per cent. Instead of increasing the accommodation in the Mental hospitals, consideration would be given to retrenchment.

We heard yesterday that the membership of the T.N.A.I. now stands at over 1,200. If everyone of us resolved to teach (in some practical way) little children and young people the simple yet beautiful rules of purity, this transformation would not be an impossible ideal for the future generation.

We firmly believe that if the preventive aims of the Association are to be carried out in India, the co-operation and training of parents is of the first importance.

What is the present attitude of many parents in this country with regard to their boys and girls?

They consider it a sign of cleverness for the little brother to even strike his mother or his sister, because his will is considered by the rest of the family and by himself to be superior to theirs. The sisters must quietly forego any little pleasure they would wish for, if they interfere in any way with that of their brothers'. Thus from infancy the false idea that men are superior beings to women quickly develops and the idea of equality with the opposite sex becomes an unthinkable proposal to them.

Sex-selfishness is at the root of immoral vice, be it commercialised or not.

In a recent report of the League of Nations Committee on Traffic in Women and Children, mention is made of the great change that has taken place in public opinion, on the subject of regulated prostitution including the licensing of brothels, etc. This report goes on to say 'We feel now however, that the education of adult public opinion and the education of youth needs to be emphasised in regard to certain other aspects, if a real and serious effort is to be made to encourage the youth of the world to view this matter from the highest moral standpoint.'

'First, in regard to prostitution, the women's societies all over the world are convinced, that public opinion should be directed to the fact that all private and public action taken to reduce prostitution and venereal infection, and to suppress the third party exploiter of sexual immorality, should be based on the fundamental principle, that an equal responsibility rests on both sexes for their conduct in matters of sex. Prostitution is an inevitable corollary of one standard of sex morality being upheld by public opinion in regard to women and a quite different one with regard to men. Any nation that accepts the double standard of morals in sex is encouraging prostitution. If, therefore, a real effort is to be made to reduce prostitution to a minimum, it is necessary to educate public opinion to challenge the double standard of sex morality wherever it exists in law and practice.'

'In the past prostitution was a subject which was not openly discussed and investigated. Now it has been brought out into the light of day and, as a result of this open and honest investigation, great efforts are being made by every kind of social welfare organisation and by the Government of many countries to alter the conditions which lead women into prostitution.'

Mahatma Gandhi writing in his periodical says 'But the sex education that I stand for must have for its object the conquest and sublimation of the sex passion. Such education should automatically serve to bring home to children the essential distinction between man and brute, and to make them realise that it is a man's special privilege and pride, to be gifted with the faculties of head and heart; that he is a thinking no less than a feeling animal, as the very derivation of the word shows, and to renounce the sovereignty of reason over the blind instincts is therefore to renounce a man's estate. In man reason quickens and guides the feeling, in the brute the soul lies ever dormant. To awaken the heart is to awaken the dormant soul, to awaken reason, and to inculcate discrimination between good and evil. . . . 'Today our entire environment—our reading, our thinking, our social behaviour—is generally calculated to subserve and cater for the sex urge. To break through its coils is no easy task. But it is a task worthy of our highest endeavour. Even if there are a handful of teachers endowed with practical experience, who accept the ideal of attaining self-control as the highest duty of man, and are fired by a genuine and undying faith in their mission, and are sleeplessly vigilant and active, their labour will light the path of the children of Gujarat, save the unwary from falling into the mire of sexuality and rescue those who might be already engulfed in it.'

The League of Nations Report on the abolition of licensed houses that was issued by the A.M.S.H., New Delhi, stresses 'the importance of education, the wise use of leisure, and the encouragement of out-door recreation, so highly appreciated by the present generation'.

During the past decade wise legislation has been introduced in many parts of India, but this will only prove itself to be of a real preventive hindrance to immorality, as the pure in mind help to carry out the letter of the law.

Some two years ago a Bill was passed in this State to suppress traffic in immorality. Government will make the Bill operable when they are assured that adequate accommodation for minors and others who are rescued from brothels, has been provided for, in thoroughly approved of rescue homes. A very adequate and well appointed Home has been in operation for some time in Bangalore and we hope that a small one will shortly be opened in this City.

The annual report of the Mysore State Branch of the A.M.S.H. refers to sex education as follows :

'The matter of chastity is bound up with the emotional as well as the mental activity of each personality, and knowledge therefore is not everything. Nevertheless, it has often been sheer ignorance and unsatisfied curiosity resulting therefrom, which has started a boy on a life of unchastity, injurious to him as an individual and as a citizen.

Information loosely, and often erroneously related, is easy to acquire, but real knowledge is less available. We teach a boy a difficult Euclid problem which may never deeply concern him, while we omit to teach him how to control the puzzling life-giving forces he finds surging through him. We teach a girl science, but fail to acquaint her with the fascinating knowledge of how best she may guard and use her sacred obligation of carrying on the race.

The impact of this century's life on India has been unusual in its force and complexity. The comparatively sudden proximity of boys and girls in educational institutions, the new freedom girls enjoy, the modern conditions which make easy Western forms of vice, once unknown in India,—all these tend to create a situation where modern sanctions have become obscure. It is for this generation to see to it that in these new conditions there are built up ideals of moral conduct consistent with India's long heritage of concern for the sanctity of family life.

As I began my remarks on a personal note I should like to finish them on the same ground.

Those of us who have worked in Mission Hospitals and had the responsibility and care of young nurses have sometimes been accused of 'over-sheltering', making them unfit when their training is over to meet temptations. What justification has there been for this over-carefulness? The plain fact that no man can alone bear the responsibility of his own sin. When we have heard of nurse-probationers and nurses who have fallen into sin we have felt their disgrace to be our shame, and the dishonoring of our Nursing Profession.

If the human being willeth to transgress the laws of health no outward pressure can prevent him from so doing, yet environment can very largely help the prevention of diseased thoughts and actions.

Why has the Nursing profession in India been dragged so often into the mire of immorality?

Because nurses have been sent to work in lonely places; no thought has been given to her as a 'being with human instincts'. As long as she did her work during the appointed hours nobody cared for her comfort when the day or night work was done. The idea that she possessed a real personality that claimed the right of adequate protection was never considered by those for whom she worked.

Such conditions have not only prevailed in the lonely country places but also in our most enlightened cities.

Sometime ago I had cause to visit a young nurse-probationer about 9 o'clock at night. As there was insufficient room in the hospital compound, many of the nurses had to live out, and she was one of these unfortunate

girls. After many enquiries and with great difficulty I stumbled up some dark steps and found her living in a chattram. This building had no other lights than the little Ps. 3-oil lamps that the tenants provided. Young nurse-probationers had to live there surrounded by all kinds of people of both sexes.

Was it any wonder that the girl that I sought that night was quickly added to the list of those who have put yet another black mark of shame to our sacred Calling?

Only last week we heard that the path she pursued during those unprotected days was still bearing heart-breaking results in her life.

The Mysore Women's State Conference met in Hassan last week and sent a unanimous resolution to Government asking that better and more adequate accommodation be provided for Nurses.

We are sure that as the Mysore Government have shown such generous hospitality in welcoming the T.N.A.I. Conference to their Capital City, they will show equal generosity and sympathy not only to this resolution but to all efforts that are made to make the Members of the Nursing Profession mentally and physically, fully efficient, so that each one can carry out in her own sphere of labour, the Aims that the A.M.S.H. stands for throughout the world.

STUDENT NURSES' ASSOCIATION SECTION

Reports and Articles for this Section will be welcomed by the Hony. Organising Secretary, Miss Pitman, Women's Medical College Hospital, Vellore.

THE STUDENT NURSES' ASSOCIATION OF THE TRAINED NURSES' ASSOCIATION OF INDIA—SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT, 1937-38

By Miss SHARWOOD-SMITH

During the past year, the Student Nurses' Association has maintained the right to the name of 'A healthy infant' which was given to it at the last Conference. Its growth has been steady and sure and the weight of its opinions is beginning to be felt.

At Conference last year our total membership was 605 in 18 Units, now we are 746 in 25 Units. Of this number 23 are Student Health Visitors and 9 are Student Midwives.

The New Units have been formed in the following hospitals:—

1. Medical College, Calcutta—51 members.
2. R. M. Government Hospital, Tanjore, affiliated with the General Hospital, Madras—11.
3. Mayo Hospital, Nagpur—10 members.
4. Irwin Hospital, Delhi—12 members.
5. Sambhu Nath Pandit Hospital, Calcutta—20 members.
6. Lady Reading Health School, Delhi—23 members.

The Unit of the Thomason and Lady Lyall Hospitals, Agra has divided and each Hospital now has its own Unit, which brings the number of Units up to 25.

The Dufferin Hospital, Karachi has 9 Associate Student Midwives members. The Punjab Health School at Lahore are thinking of forming a Unit, and we hope that all the other Health Schools in India will follow the example of the Lady Reading Health School, and that by this time next year the Student Health Visitors will be a strong body of keen people.