

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES.

THE LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES.

[Paper written and read by Miss Round at the T. N. A. Conference held in Bombay in November 1925.]

THE Red Cross is an emblem which is recognized and respected by all civilized peoples. The movement for which it stands derives its origin from the initiative of one Henry Dunant, a Genevese, who witnessed and was profoundly shocked at the sight of the acute and awful sufferings of the soldiers at the Battle of Solferino in 1859. The Geneva Convention, signed in 1864, thanks to the effort of Henry Dunant and his friends, gave official recognition to the rights of the wounded; and the duty of civilized men to relieve suffering—even the suffering of their enemies on the field of battle was thus formulated as an accepted canon of International morality. Red Cross Societies—the first of which was founded in 1864, five years after the Battle of Solferino—have as their primary purpose the care of the sick, wounded and prisoners in time of war. But their activities to-day extend far beyond this field. Their watchword is the relief of suffering at all times, whoever the sufferer may be or whatever the cause of the distress. They are the only societies which seek for trouble in all parts of the world. They do not however try to stop cyclones, tornadoes and storms, or attempt to convince volcanoes and earthquakes of the error of their ways; but they do hasten to the places where these disasters occur. The acceptance by Red Cross Societies of a wider responsibility dates from 1919, when on the initiative of Henry P. Davidson, Chairman of the War Council of the American Red Cross, the Red Cross Societies of France, Italy, Japan, the United States and Great Britain founded the League of Red Cross Societies. Fifty-two independent National Red Cross Societies are members of the League, which is a purely voluntary organization, without political, racial or religious complexion of any kind. Its purpose is the development of the Red Cross movement as an asset to humanity; to increase its activities by co-operation with other Red Cross Societies and similar organizations. The general policy of the League is laid down by the General Council, composed of delegates of all the societies belonging to the League. They have adopted the resolution at each council of extending their work in peace time, and have recommended that particular attention be given to the organization of relief in disasters such as lately befel Japan, the development of health propaganda, extension of their nursing activities and the organization of Junior Red Cross groups. The Board of Governors consists of representatives of each of the five founder societies. It meets annually to decide upon the action to be taken by the League secretariat during the ensuing year. The secretariat, whose headquarters are in Paris, is a central

office equipped to collect and distribute information bearing upon all phases of Red Cross work and to assist national societies in planning and carrying into execution the activities most appropriate to the needs of their respective countries. One of its most important functions is the maintenance of close co-operation with the League of Nations. The work of the Red Cross at present lies mainly in three directions—(1) The supply of comforts to military and civil hospitals. (2) Child welfare. (3) Public health propaganda. The supply of comforts to military hospitals is one of the primary objects of the society, the other items are in accordance with its more recent peace-time programme. With regard to India, the people are taking an increasing interest in child welfare and health work, but so far only a fraction of the field that lies before them has been touched. The Red Cross places child welfare work in the forefront of its campaign. In a special work on child welfare nursing published this year in Paris splendid and concise ideas are given concerning (1) Plan of organizing new work. (2) Rural work. Urban work. This special study is intended to help Red Cross Societies, Health Associations, and especially nurses who are organizing or developing child welfare nursing in one or all of its many branches by giving them information regarding the experience of others in the same field, and noteworthy experiments in various countries. Other studies of a similar nature including the training for child welfare work is to be published shortly. In the one already obtainable one gets glimpses of this work in various countries such as the visiting nurse and pre-natal care in Czecho-Slovakia, clinic for expectant mothers, a visiting nurse instructing a class of expectant mothers; fresh air for every child; a kindergarten for delicate children; a kindergarten and rest time for healthy children, and fresh air while learning, Paris. A "Well-Babies'" clinic and children's clinic, United States. A Day Nursery in Barcelona, Spain. Health stories and a child health clinic, Latvia. The daily inspection of a Day Nursery, Toronto, Canada. An open air Day Nursery in South Africa. Weighing the baby in a child's clinic, China, and the visiting nurse transforming a home, in Italy. The widespread area of the society can be partly gauged by reading of these organizations all over the world. Now when we come to India we find that the appalling ignorance which prevails amongst the masses, and also to a great extent amongst the classes makes public health and child welfare work a most important part for the Red Cross to cope with. Ten different pamphlets have been published showing causation and treatment of preventable diseases, and one very specially interesting called the "Elements of Hygiene" has been published in twelve vernaculars including Assamese and Kasi. Also two films have been obtained from the League for use in this country—The rat and the fly. Another most effective form of propaganda has been the institution of travelling dispensaries. There are three such in India—one in the United Provinces, one in Baluchistan and one in Sind. In other countries they have also instituted travelling dental clinics which have proved a great blessing to schools and villages some distance from a town. Besides these, the Red Cross possesses a large number of motor ambulances for the use of accident and emergency work. In England the Red Cross nurse alongside St. John's Ambulance Brigade is always near at hand when

any large crowd collects, especially during the time of Royal processions and functions. These go quietly in and out amongst the crowd caring for the faint and weary and taking charge of small babies or any children, who have got lost.

During the trouble in Greece thousands of refugees were housed, clothed, and fed by the Red Cross in co-operation with other societies. Those who took part in the Great War know to what an extent the Red Cross helped. Thousands of our soldiers were provided with comforts. One could not number the cigarettes, boxes of matches, socks, mittens, helmets, notepaper, toothbrushes, soap, and thousands of other articles too numerous to mention which the Red Cross sent to the various battle fronts. One of the most important events of last year was the meeting of the General Council in Paris. The session occupied five days. The resolution which concerns the society here in India bears the title "Pioneer character of the Red Cross" and runs as follows: The General Council considers that the creation of an intelligent demand for better health conditions, and an increasing knowledge of the means of securing them, should eventually become a Government function; but it desires strongly to confirm its conviction that Red Cross Societies should undertake to arouse public interest in this direction and to demonstrate practical methods of meeting the need, with the intention of withdrawing from any specific activity whenever Government, municipalities or other public bodies undertake it as a permanent responsibility. This represents the pledged intention of the Indian Red Cross Society. Another important feature was the representation of the Indian Red Cross Society at the third English speaking conference on Infant Welfare at Caxton Hall, Westminster. The Indian representatives were Sir Frederick and Lady Whyte, Mrs. A. Cottle and Mrs. E. J. Oakly. In India 23 British Station hospitals, 10 Indian, 54 civil hospitals and about 100 miscellaneous units including Government hospitals and a great many Baby week and welfare communities have been helped, even extending to Mesopotamia. You have only to look at the report book to see the number of its activities. Two new branches—the Kolar Goldfields and the Cambay State—were formed during the past year and the formation of five more state branches at Mysore, Junagadh, Morvi, Mangrol and Dharangadhra is under contemplation.

The Junior Red Cross groups have magazines printed in 25 different countries. "The Red Cross brought bread to our starving children, and that was good; now they are no longer starving it brings them ideas, and that is even better." Thus did a Jugo Slavian professor rephrase a piece of ancient wisdom when the Red Cross Society of that kingdom was beginning to organize its child membership in 1922. The magazines reaches approximately eight million children and they are the channels through which these ideas flow. This group of journals aims at realizing among children three of the hopes whereon the world constructs its dream of a future which shall outstrip the past; robust health, fine character expressed in socially valuable deeds, and better understanding the one of the other. The Italian Red Cross has issued a series of posters from the brush of A. Micheli, destined for the decoration of public waiting rooms, hospitals and schools. These serve as silent reminders that dust, flies, careless

expectoration, hasty eating and wrong posture are to be avoided, while fresh air, exercise and cleanliness are to be sought by all who value health. In conclusion the expansion of the societies scope in 1923 justified optimistic predictions for 1924 and in its turn 1924 and 1925 gives us good reason to look forward to 1926 and future years with ambitious anticipation. To maintain what has been gained and still further to widen the scope of its efforts, it cordially invites the co-operation of all.

By the 25th article of the Covenant of the League of Nations, all states adhering to this League have given explicit recognition to the great international power for human betterment which the Red Cross represents; for they are pledged by this instrument "to encourage and promote the establishment and co-operation of duly authorized voluntary Red Cross organizations, having as purposes the improvement of health, the prevention of disease, and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world.

EXCURSION.

THE VALLEYS OF THE TWEED, THE YARROW, AND THE ETTRICK,
THE SCOTT COUNTRY.

[SPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR *The Nursing Journal of India*
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There could be no better preparation for a tour through this beautiful country than to refresh one's memory about the main facts connected with the life and writings of the man whose prodigious literary genius has cast a magic spell over every acre of it. No apology is therefore necessary for this brief preface to our itinerary.

Sir Walter Scott (Bart.), whose father was a writer to the Signet (a Scottish Solicitor), was born in Edinburgh in 1771, and educated in his native city for the bar. He was one of the greatest of British novelists and a distinguished poet. He was one of the most prolific of writers, often, like Shakespeare, turning out three masterpieces in a year. His poetry is original, interesting, easily understood, and possesses exceptional charm; and his prose writings cover such a wide field that it is impossible to devise a simple formula which will describe all of them. This extraordinary versatility and his power of communicating life to his characters, to the story and to the dialogue place him in the first rank of British novelists. Sixteen of his twenty-nine prose works deal with historical subjects, the remaining thirteen deal with private life, with an occasional historical vein. His "*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*" was published in 1802, when he was 31 years of age, "*The Lay of the Last Minstrel*" in 1808, quickly followed by "*Marmion*," "*The Lady of the Lake*," "*Rokeby*," and "*The Lord of the Isles*." In 1814 he published "*Waverley*" anonymously, and "*Guy Mannering*," "*The Antiquary*," "*Old Mortality*," "*Rob Roy*," and "*The Heart of Midlothian*" were all published before his identity was discovered. The author of "*The Waverley Novels*" thus earned for himself the cognomen of "The Great Unknown."