

the following resolution, drawn up, after careful consideration, by a number of representative practitioners: 'That it is to the interest of the public and of the medical profession that the Council of the British Medical Association should take power and authority to protect both the individual and the collective interests of the medical profession, and the Council be requested to take such steps as may be necessary to enable it to actively undertake these duties.' I think that if members of the profession will come forward and help to carry this resolution, they will be doing something much more practical than merely hammering at the old corporations. It appears to be much better policy to leave these close boroughs alone, and to convert the British Medical Association into a body powerful enough to cope with them. When the latter is done little fear need be felt as to the result. The association has the numbers besides possessing practically an unlimited field for raising funds. What would £1 per head alone mean for the campaign chest? The working men of this country subscribe very much more, in proportion to their means, to their own unions, and I do not believe for one instant that the members of our own profession would be unwilling to subscribe less in proportion to their earnings, supposing they felt that something substantial was being done for their interests."

The Leper Mission.

SOME very interesting details have been published about the Mission to Lepers in India and the East, after nearly twenty-one years' work. The mission extends to India, Ceylon, Burmah, China, and Japan, and there are altogether seventeen Asylums or Hospitals entirely supported by the Society, while eleven similar institutions receive aid from the Mission. The special aim of the mission is to provide homes for the children of lepers, in the hope—which has proved to be well founded—that many will be rescued from the unhappy lot of their parents.

The sympathetic interest in lepers extends to all classes, and even among the very poorest. In Clapham, in one very destitute neighbourhood, a few very poor people, hearing of the work of the Mission, began giving a halfpenny a week each, in order to be able to support a child in one of the homes—the sum required being only £4.

One of the missionaries engaged in the work writes:—

"One very painful yet interesting incident occurred this year. Many years ago, when I was first labouring in Rajputana, I had a servant, a Mahomedan, who was very useful and faithful. Years went by, and I used to think of him occasionally, when to my horror and surprise the poor fellow met me on one of the public roads a few months ago, and I saw that he was a leper. I felt very much at seeing him in such a condition, and questioned him about himself. He could give me no definite account of how the disease came upon him; but here he is, and I have met him several times since, and spoken with him. He said to me, 'Sahib, all other people despise me, but you do not

seem to have any loathing for me; it must be because you are a padri sahib' (missionary)."

Miss Mary Reed, who has been for some time doing fine work among the lepers, writes in April of having attended the Thull Mela, usually resorted to by a great throng of worshippers, her object being to seek out and befriend those afflicted with leprosy. "I took," she says, "two boys and two men from the Asylum to help me in looking for these afflicted ones. My faithful servants too made a thorough canvass of the crowds to satisfy my heart that none would be missed. Should we have found and brought in but one I should have felt repaid for the journey and expense. . . . One of the four afflicted ones we brought home with us is a little girl about nine years old—Gongali. One hand and one foot are affected, and sadly need the treatment they will now receive. She had been cast out to beg her food, and seemed homeless and friendless, though her mother is still living. I met the mother, and talked with her at the Mela, and she seemed to care nothing for this poor little thing. Since Gongali's arrival she has undergone such a process of scrubbing, combing, and dressing, she seems a different creature, and is looking clean and bright; she is so pleased with her new friends and home!"

One of the Missionaries in China sends the following Report:—

"Seven leper women attend the Hospital regularly as out-patients, and two live a short distance, and come daily for their rice.

The history of one is touching. At the age of ten Sz-che showed signs of leprosy, but being very little marked, married four years later. For a time Sz-che lived happily with her husband; but three years ago, when leprosy developed badly on her face, the man left her, and has not been heard of since. Sz-che was forced to gain her living by begging, until two years ago, when she came to the Hospital. Within the last two months her mother, wishing to make some money, desired to sell her daughter again, and this time to a leper living in the Pakhoi leper village. Sz-che, believing it to be wrong to marry this man, refuses to comply with her parent's wishes. Her mother is now persecuting her in every way possible, and only a few days ago set fire to her little hut, in which Sz-che had lived for the last two years.

Sz-che begs us to admit her into the Leper Hospital; but all we can do is to give her another hut *outside* the Compound."

"It is a cause of great grief to me that our poor lepers often are at strife with each other; but I am inclined to think that it is partly their disease that makes them discontented and cross at times. On the other hand, I must say that their anger with each other is not deep or of long duration, and they are very soon ready to forgive and forget."

previous page

next page