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principles of psychology to the problems of human adjustment. The principles of true religion, reaching to the roots of life in all its manifold relations, implicitly include the particular psychological truths formulated as mental hygiene. When these truths are fully utilized as a basis for education, training, habits, and character, they constitute, as an inherent result of their vitally formative and directive influence, the only secure foundation for the mental health and happiness of the individual and the race.

## THE SOCIETY OF CATHOLIC MEDICAL MISSIONARIES, BROOKLAND, WASHINGTON, D. C.

By SISTER ANNA DENGEL, M.D.

**T**HE Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries was founded in 1925 in Brookland, Washington, D. C., with the approval of His Excellency, the Most Reverend Michael J. Curley, D.D., Archbishop of Baltimore.

The Society did not spring up over night; it had a long and interesting preparation. Even at the present time the meaning, aims, scope and purpose of Medical Missions are still very little understood by Catholics; thirty years ago much less so. And yet the seed of sending professional medical aid to the missions as a work of charity was already planted three decades ago by Dr. Agnes McLaren, a Scotch convert. To make a long story short, may it only be mentioned that she went to India at the age of seventy to study the need for women doctors and medical relief for the secluded women of the harems and others cut off from access to medical aid by men because of religious laws and customs. While there were at least a hundred Protestant women doctors and Protestant purdah hospitals in India then, there was only one small Catholic hospital beyond the dispensary stage, and that one was in the south of India. Dr. McLaren founded a hospital for women and children in the north of India where the women were so secluded that, after sixteen years of labor there, the Prefect Apostolic could say: "I have never seen the face of a Mohammedan woman."

Dr. McLaren obtained Sisters for her hospital, but the difficulty lay in finding a woman doctor and trained nurses who could attend to all the needs of the patients. She first sought help from England, Ireland and Scotland, hoping to find a Catholic woman doctor. She was not successful. Then it occurred to her that the problem could be solved if young Sisters would be permitted to study medicine. One community actually volunteered but permission had to be obtained from Rome. Dr. McLaren journeyed thither five times between 1910 and 1913 to push the project. Rome remained silent. Dr. McLaren

was undaunted. The next idea that occurred to her was the possibility of a young girl taking up the study of medicine as a missionary vocation. Miss Anna Dengel volunteered, studied medicine and after obtaining her degree and some experience, she took charge of the hospital which Dr. McLaren had founded in Rawalpindi.

During her four years' practice there it became quite evident to Dr. Dengel that there was a vast field of Christian charity for the sick and suffering not only in India, but also in Africa and China and that isolated mission doctors would not be enough for the development and progress of that network of Catholic hospitals and medical works of mercy so much needed all over the non-Christian world. In order to devote herself to the development of Medical Missions, Dr. Dengel left her work in India and came to the United States to make conditions and needs known. Here she was encouraged and helped in her project by members of the hierarchy, the directors of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Catholic Medical Mission Board, the National Council of Catholic Women and many private individuals. Convinced that there would be young women who would not shirk hard studies and a thorough professional preparation when it was a question of spreading the Faith and of relieving the suffering of helpless people, in 1925 she founded the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries in Brookland, Washington, D. C., with the assistance of the Reverend Michael A. Mathis, C. S. C.

The Society admits those who are already doctors, pharmacists, nurses, etc., and also young women who have completed high school or college and who wish to devote themselves to the care of the sick in the missions. The latter take up their professional studies after completion of the novitiate. Recently Dr. Helen Lalinsky, S.C.M.M., who made her entire medical course as a Sister, obtained her degree of doctor of medicine after completing her internship at the Misericordia Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At present three Sisters are studying medicine and several are doing pre-medical work at Trinity College, Washington, D. C.

Several years ago Our Holy Father said to the Medical Missionary Sisters in a private audience: "Your Society responds to my thought and desire." This year *The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda* issued an Instruction expressing the wish that missionary Sisters become doctors and permitting them and Sister nurses to practice obstetrics.

The Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries was founded specifically for medical mission work and so anticipated this desire of the Church by eleven years. At present the Society conducts two hospitals and training schools for native nurses and also child-welfare and maternity centers in India, and has received more than fifty requests to undertake medical mission work in India, China and Africa.