

A living culture of a bacillus may be employed for test purposes. This method is still used by certain French workers. In the case of bactericidal sera it is a method universally employed.

(To be continued.)

District Nursing as a Hygienic Agency.*

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I take as my text for this short paper Mr. Charles Booth's sentence in "Life and Labour of the People of London": "Of all forms that charity takes, there is hardly one that is so directly successful as district nursing. It is almost true, that wherever a nurse enters the standard of life is raised."

1. The primary and most evident way in which the standard is raised is the restoration to health brought about by the district nurse in her faithfully fulfilling her duty "to nurse under the doctors' directions in the homes of the sick poor." On this subject it is best to quote from the letter of a doctor: "A great deal more depends in medical practice upon careful nursing and dieting than on the drugs we prescribe. This is specially true in dispensary practice, for our patients are very ignorant, often very careless. Often have I gone away from a patient with a sick heart, because I knew that the most carefully-given directions would be disregarded; but when a competent nurse will come and do what is required, I go away with a sense of relief and without anxiety, knowing that the instructions will be carried out faithfully and efficiently. And I may add, though perhaps it goes without saying, that I have found the nurses always anxious to co-operate heartily with the doctors and carry out their instructions. They have also been a great boon to the patients, and that not only from a professional point of view, in washing, dressing, and nursing patients, but from a more general point of view. We hear in our day much of the cry of the outcast poor, and innumerable organisations are being started to relieve want and poverty; but when all has been said the most powerful factor is personal influence, and the kind, cheery way—never worried, never wearied—with which the nurses have gone in and out among the poor has elicited many a heartfelt note of gratitude. They have brought cheer and joy to many homes; and as they have restored health to the sick bodies, they have restored life to the drooping hearts. I earnestly hope, therefore, that the Insti-

tute will receive liberal support, and that you will be able not only to double but to quadruple the number of your nurses."

2. Valuable as district nurses are, working under and with medical men, it is a question if their still greater influence in raising the standard of life will not be found to be as teaching and preventive agents. To promote a more general knowledge and practice of the laws of health is the chief object of this Congress, and one in which, so far as the poor and working classes are concerned, no more efficient co-workers could be found than the steadily increasing body of district nurses, who have constant opportunities, by precept and practice, of explaining and pressing home the laws of health, in great as well as in small matters. Not only is the district nurse well fitted for this duty because of the special and excellent training she receives, but because in many cases she, in the course of her duty, comes into close contact with the best possible methods of domestic management. It is astonishing how perfect is the ruling of her house by many a working man's wife. From such, Nurse learns what is possible in similar households, and by tactful hints and encouraging words she may and does produce marked improvement, which must make for the better health of whole families. Much tact and kindness are needed, especially until the patients and their families realise that Nurse is their friend, and in sympathy with their difficulties. In trying to raise the standard of life, the following are a few of the points the nurse may deal with:—

(a) *Household Sanitation.*—Nurse will explain and support sanitary regulations, bring people to see that the sanitary inspector is a true friend and not an interfering enemy from whom things must be hidden, and Nurse can instruct them how to take advantage of what sanitary authorities are able to do for them in regard to drainage, disinfection, and nuisances. Then she can explain why fresh air is necessary, not only for the sick, but in order to retain health; why chimneys must not be stuffed up, nor gas burned at night, nor cisterns allowed to remain dirty, and she can advise as to the management of the dust bin, &c. She can also give valuable hints as to the selection of a house, and tell what requirements are essential and what are at least desirable.

(b) In cases of incipient consumption, Nurse notes when attending one patient that another member of the family is drooping, and much can be done for prevention at an early stage if the importance is understood, not only of open windows but of sitting out of doors in the sunshine if possible; of using the perhaps more sunny parlour, instead of reserving it for special occasions; of special care as to clothing and avoidance of chills, &c.; and Nurse can obtain from another agency the nourishing milk and eggs for the poorer patients. In these ways

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