

The Conference.

THE SESSION ON TUBERCULOSIS.

The first evening session was devoted to the consideration of the "Care of the Consumptive," when the chair was taken by Miss Isla Stewart, Hon. Vice-President of the International Council of Nurses, who, in introducing Dr. Kelynaock, Physician to Mount Vernon Hospital for Consumption, the reader of the first paper, said that the knowledge of the nurse on the subject of tuberculosis should be expert. If this expert knowledge were general, instead of expert ignorance, nurses might be very useful, and successful teachers of both rich and poor with whom they came into close contact. There were an enormous number of people who did not take the trouble to think, but who believed what they were told if they heard it often enough.

THE NURSING PROFESSION AND THE CARE OF THE CONSUMPTIVE.

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THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM.

Miss Stewart and fellow workers, if you will allow me to call you so:—

Consumption, or "The Great White Plague," as it has very aptly been called, is a medico-sociological problem of immense magnitude. In this country alone there are probably a quarter of a million people affected. In England and Wales 40,000 persons die with this terrible disease every year. Of these, seven or eight thousand are dwellers in our great Metropolis.

It is estimated that one in every four of our adult population succumbs to consumption.

This insidious disease is a world-wide scourge. Richat estimates the death roll of the wars of the nineteenth century as fourteen million, and that of consumption during the same period and in the same countries as no less than thirty million. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the devastating effects of this malady. It produces indescribable suffering, incalculable loss, wrecking careers, breaking up homes, impairing individual and national efficiency, paralysing philanthropic effort, and adding a burden to the community greater even than it can bear.

Face to face with such a foe our weapons of defence seem miserably inadequate and our means for assisting the stricken deplorably meagre.

Measures directed to secure prevention are

comparatively few and can scarcely be said to be systematically applied.

Suitable accommodation available for the carrying out of adequate treatment whereby arrest may be attained is altogether insignificant. For the estimated 150,000 consumptives in England and Wales alone there are probably less than 2,000 beds open in sanatoria and special hospitals for the disease, and the price to be paid in most instances absolutely prevents the entrance of the most needy.

Even for the hopeless and helpless the destitute and dying consumptive almost all doors seem closed except that of the greatly dreaded Union Infirmary.

THE NURSE'S POINT OF VIEW.

But it is not for us to-night to discuss the problem in all its far-reaching entanglements and with all its intricate relationships to social ills and economic difficulties. It is for us rather to consider in this conference the nurse's view point. What can the trained nurse do to aid in the extermination of the scourge? How can she best render help to those already stricken? In what way can she best take her share in the Anti-Tuberculosis Campaign?

SPECIAL TRAINING IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CONSUMPTIVES.

Every nurse should be a hygiene-missionary. Fast fettered as we still are to ancient traditions and superstitious practices, and ever hampered and hindered by the twin impediments apathy and ignorance, there is a danger lest a nurse, however braced by high ideals and directed by sound knowledge, may rest satisfied with being a mere tender of the sick, an obedient servant of the doctor, a useful human machine wound up in a Nursing School.

The nurse of the future is to be much more than this. She is to be an educational force, a directing power in the prevention of disease, a loyal worker in schools, in homes, in dispensaries, in the many and numerous institutions and organisations rapidly springing into being and which sooner or later shall be co-ordinated and correlated into a complete and comprehensive Public Health Service.

The far-seeing nurse should understand that she may take an honourable place and play no insignificant part in the conflict with consumption.

At present in most of our general hospitals nurses have little or no opportunity of learning how to deal rationally with the consumptive. Comparatively few have had any real experience in the hygienic management of this class of case.

There is on the part of many nurses a distaste for, amounting sometimes to a prejudice

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