

pay where he can have part of the day to rest; or, if the case requires absolute rest, it is necessary to induce him to give up work and to arrange for the maintenance of himself and family in some other way, pointing out to him how essential it is for him to regain his health if he would take care of his family permanently. In this matter of work it is of the greatest assistance if a light labour bureau for tuberculosis patients has been established. It is then possible to obtain the kind of labour he can do with safety, preferably out of door work, and arrange for the number of hours he can devote to it.

Another important part of the nurse's duties is to direct the attention of the patient and his family to the value of proper food, and to teach them that not only is it necessary for the patient himself to have nourishing food, but also for all the members of the family, for, by building up the strength they can better resist disease and infection. When the food supply is not sufficient for the patient milk and eggs are usually supplied by some one of the organised charities, and the nurse instructs the family how to prepare them in tempting and healthful ways—for a long continued diet of milk and eggs sometimes becomes repugnant, unless varied in the manner of taking.

So far the instruction given has been mostly for the patient himself, but even more important, because more far-reaching, is the instruction given as to the care for others.

He is told over and over again how important it is that he should destroy his sputum, and what care should be taken to guard against infection, impressing upon him at the same time that there is no danger, and that he is not a menace to his family if only he will observe these few simple rules.

He is given the sputum cups, the paper napkins and bags, etc., and carefully watched and directed until it is found that he not only understands and appreciates their use, but is following out the instructions conscientiously.

A matter of great importance is the fumigation or disinfection of houses following the death or removal of a tuberculosis patient.

We have already spoken of the way in which these patients move from house to house, leaving infected quarters behind them, and the frequently tragic results of families moving into these infected homes is incontrovertible. Cases have been known where nearly every member of a family has contracted the disease after moving into a house whose former occupant has either died from, or been in an advanced stage of, consumption.

The nurse is able, to a great extent, to keep

track of these removals, and in each case she reports at once to the Health Authorities, who, in turn, send the disinfecting squad, and the place is fumigated and made safe for occupancy.

New York, Chicago, and San Francisco have recognised the important part that a visiting nurse takes in the prevention of disease by thus inspecting and reporting infected quarters, and have conferred upon her the title of Voluntary Health Inspector and given her an official badge to wear.

This matter of fumigation and inspection of housing conditions is of the utmost importance. The unsanitary condition of the crowded tenements of the poor, combined with the carelessness, ignorance, and poverty of the people, makes these places the very hot-beds of infection, and these conditions can best be controlled by municipal interference.

In most of the leading cities of the country compulsory registration of all cases of tuberculosis is now enforced, New Orleans and Denver being the most conspicuous examples of those lacking in their duty. This is one of the most urgent needs in the prevention of tuberculosis.

Dr. Kress, of Los Angeles, Cal., says: "It is a reasonable assumption that tuberculosis cannot be prevented on a large scale unless the public health officials know where it is to be found, and what persons are afflicted with it, and compulsory registration is the only method that will give the authorities this information."

It is seen, therefore, that this compulsory registration is of the very gravest importance. It means that the Health Department is enabled to locate every case of tuberculosis in the city, it means that the premises may be inspected and unsanitary conditions rectified; it means that the patients and families may be instructed in the rules necessary for the prevention of infection; and it means, finally, that every case shall be under constant surveillance, and that should the patient die, or move to some other locality, that the room or rooms shall be disinfected.

In Cleveland, Ohio, a great work is being done by the tuberculosis nurse in bringing whole families to the Dispensary for examination, and a regularly conducted children's clinic is held every Saturday afternoon. Boston, also, has recently inaugurated a systematic effort in this direction.

When one member of a family is affected with the disease there is always more or less danger that other members may have become infected. The nurse, therefore, with infinite tact, induces each one, children as well as

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)