

The Usefulness of the Visiting Nurse in Tuberculous Cases.

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The following is, eliminating the opening remarks, a copy of an address delivered before the class of 1904, Newport Hospital Training-School for Nurses, at Newport, R.I., at the graduating exercises held in August:—

"This day brings to an end your school life. To-morrow you take your diploma and go out into the world, armed for the work which lies before you. The change from to-day to to-morrow is a momentous one in your lives. Here, for many months under the sheltering care of this well-equipped hospital, guided and directed by the instruction and inspiration of those who have been so eager to make you equivalent in usefulness to themselves, you have found work at hand and duty plain. To-morrow you must take up your own individual responsibilities, trusting to your own character and capabilities to make your life successful and, if you will but look at success from the right point of view, I know of no calling which opens up greater opportunities for the full measure of true success than that which you have chosen.

"Think not to light a light to shine before men that they may see your good works," rather you are to join the great army of quiet workers, "who strive not, neither do they cry, nor are their voices heard in the street, but to whom is given the ministry of consolation in sorrow and in sickness." To you, "the silent workers of the ranks, in villages, in country districts in the slums of our great cities, in the homes of the rich and in the hovels of the poor, to you is given the task of illustrating in your lives standards of humanity, of probity, of sympathy," as it is given to no other class of workers, unless it be to the clergymen or to the physicians. Numerous opportunities for service lie before you. The question, in which direction you shall bend your energies to make the most of yourselves and of the training you have acquired, presents itself at the outset. You have learned here in the hospital, under the instruction of its eminent staff of physicians and its conscientious and devoted teachers of the training-school many things more useful to you than the mere care of the sick; you have learned obedience, loyalty, patience, cheerfulness, sympathy; you have learned neatness, promptness, willingness, unselfishness—all qualities absolutely indispensable to every desirable and successful nurse. And then you have studied the various fundamental principles of your calling—how to care for the sick and wounded, how to be the servant or assistant of the physician and

surgeon, and faithfully and intelligently to carry out their instructions. With such fitting, a career is open to each one in many departments of work. Your choice will be guided somewhat by circumstances, but more largely by your own desires and tastes, for to every one there is given opportunity to shape to some extent his own life and work.

To-day I want to call your attention to one field of usefulness which is just becoming open to you. I refer to visiting nursing among indigent patients with consumption or other form of tuberculosis. It is only within a very few years that attention has been given to this work, so that to you and to graduates of this year of other training-schools practically a new field for great service is offered.

It has generally been accepted that Dr. Calmette, in the town of Lille, France, was the first to inaugurate this new work, establishing there in the year 1900, a dispensary exclusively for patients with tuberculosis, part of the work of which was carried out by special nurses, who followed those presenting themselves at the dispensary to their homes. To the fact that Calmette was not the first to establish such a dispensary, Dr. Anderson, of Newport, has recently called attention, as one was in existence in Edinburgh as early as 1887. But I cannot learn that the visiting nurse shared in the work of this as she does in Lille.

All cities in all countries are contemplating following the example that Calmette has set. With the disease, consumption, so largely confined to the poorer classes of every community, and with the number of its victims so tremendously in excess of all possible hospital or sanatorium capacity for treatment, it follows that a very, very large percentage of all cases must remain at home and be treated there throughout their illness, and these homes, too, are of the poorest sort, where means and intelligence are at their very lowest ebb. The problem of reaching this large class of poor patients, caring for them and instructing them in hygienic and preventative measures, has been one to which so much thought has been given that the way now seems tolerably clear. It is through the courage, energy, and persistency of the visiting nurse, who shall devote herself almost exclusively to this single class of patients and shall become the light of their homes, guiding them perhaps to health, surely to the alleviation of their suffering and to the prevention of the spread of the disease to other members of the family and those dwelling near. The work demands a peculiar devotion to the interests of humanity, a courage and unselfishness which could not be expected to be found in every individual, and it offers in return a competent livelihood and a satisfaction, when well done, such as comes only to those who feel in their heart they have accomplished that which shall be of lasting benefit to their fellow men and to the race.

In the middle ages leprosy was one of the most

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