

Hospital Care for the Advanced and Incurable Cases of Consumption.*

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For some few years past the pens of the scientific and philanthropic have busied themselves to such an extent with tuberculosis, that very few among the learned, or unlearned, remain absolutely ignorant of the causes, methods of treatment, and prevention of the White Plague. But the fool-hardy indifference and negligence of the public, of the great mass of humanity, continue to a degree beyond what seems explicable to the more thoughtful few.

If the truth of the trite saying, "Forewarned is forearmed," be not warped and threadbare from the test of time, surely tuberculosis must soon disappear along with other deadly but vanquished foes of human health and weal.

The tremendous educational work being carried on in the widespread tuberculosis campaign *must* compel attention, and, with it, the interest and co-operation of the public. This will lead to suitable provision for the consumptive in every phase of society.

Already, by the aid of the Press, the Tuberculosis Exposition, lectures, etc., there are very few who are not familiar with the nature of the disease and some approved methods of prevention and cure. All of this educated public sentiment has led to the establishment of numerous sanatoria throughout the country, yet the demand for such care for the victims of pulmonary tuberculosis *continues* to be most inadequately met.

The wealthy, and even the people of moderate means, need concern us comparatively little at the present time, in so far as individual cases in their own homes are considered. The chief difficulty with such cases is in securing prompt diagnosis, and, in some few instances, in gaining *faithful* and intelligent co-operation with doctor and nurse in combating the malady.

This class of patient, if in the curable stages of the disease, has no trouble in obtaining sanatorium care if desired, and, if not, the supervision and encouragement of skilled nurses in the home.

These patients can also provide themselves with whatever environment is deemed most agreeable and advantageous.

After almost a decade of experience in

visiting nursing, one must realise the imperative need for hospital care of the consumptive of very limited means, and the indigent consumptive cannot be lost sight of; for if this warfare against the awful scourge is to be victorious, this seems one of the most important points upon which to concentrate attention and provide without delay the scientific and financial wherewithal essential to establish and equip, first of all, hospitals for the incurable consumptives of the poorer classes. Not only should these institutions be provided, but such legislation, both State and municipal, must be enacted as may be required to compel every case of tuberculosis who is unable to secure suitable care in his own home (or who either cannot, or will not, use such precautions as to prevent his being a menace to the health of the family or others), to enter the hospital.

From a financial standpoint, this is in every way a wiser and profitable investment.

Consider, for instance, the incurable or careless consumptive in a home where laundry or needlework is the main source of income, or has been adopted as such because the chief breadwinner in the home since the consumptive became an invalid, must have home occupation, in order to care for the patient at all. In winter there must be only one fire—that usually in the kitchen—and often we find the bed of the patient moved into this room especially if clothing and bedclothing be insufficient. The family laundry clothes, which are often placed upon this bed before being put into the baskets or parcels to be returned to the owners, who, in turn for airing, etc., place them for some hours on their own beds, or, at all events, in their bedrooms.

The family of the patient eat all meals in their kitchen, and, if equal to so much exertion, the consumptive does what he can towards the preparation of the food. The result of such conditions requires no explanation. Suffice it to say, that perhaps in nine cases out of ten such instances, the patient's family and the families whose laundry is thus contaminated, do not escape infection! Even with instruction and the help of the visiting nurse, and such further aid as to food and clothing as the charity organisation, diet kitchen, church guilds, or generous individuals may contribute, many cases in these conditions cannot apply what they know to be right methods of care and prevention.

One of the most pathetic cases in our city—a mother of five or six children, the youngest an infant of a few months, the husband employed in machine shops, had to leave home at six o'clock in the morning on account of his

* Read at the International Congress on Tuberculosis, Washington, U.S.A.

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