

The Attitude of the Modern District Nurse to Tuberculosis.*

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The modern instructive district nurse is as different from the old-fashioned nurse as any modern instrument differs from the rude one of antiquity. In the olden time goodness and sympathy were considered the essentials. To-day, science and efficiency, added to goodness, must constitute the woman and the nurse. Her position may be assured to be the leading opportunity of instruction and education. Few realise the importance of her mission. In this, her newest philanthropy, she spreads the enormous truths of modern hygiene, and becomes at once its advance agent.

In no position to-day is her worth more ably demonstrated than in its active co-operation with the crusade against the great white plague of our country—tuberculosis. Nor can we think of this world-wide movement without relation to the nursing profession. All Associations of District Nursing are co-operating with the nation in this great preventive work. So great has been their value in this respect that many are devoting their entire time to the care and prevention of tuberculosis. The most practical work is, without doubt, the educational. In the out-patient department the watchword is, "If the sick do not come to you, go out to them, and with goodness and efficiency help them to help themselves, and others."

Tuberculosis may be regarded as one of the most curable of our chronic diseases, when taken at its earliest stages. This fact must be widely impressed upon the minds of the people; the next duty being to direct them to a mode of living to meet this new condition. Their instruction should be:

First. Tuberculosis: Facts as to its nature; methods of communication; all matters pertaining to sputum such as the menace of tubercle bacilli in dust, etc.; and all methods of rendering this sputum harmless.

Second. Ventilation of living room.

Third. Cleanliness as pertaining to the patient, and others.

Fourth. Proper selection of nourishing and digestible foods.

Fifth. Appropriate clothing and bedding.

These subjects should be dealt with separately, and at length, so that the absolute value of each may be conveyed to the patient, and

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for his own safety and that of his environment. In this connection a nurse dealing with tuberculosis daily must remember her duty to herself. The best means for which would be to carry out faithfully the same rules which she preaches to others. She may then become a living example to them and thereby use the very best means to protect herself.

Nurses on tuberculosis duty may do much to advance the value of registration of these cases with the Departments of Health. This need cannot be over-estimated. Here, again, can the modern nurse bring this about in a tactful manner; enlisting on her behalf the afflicted themselves, by assuring them that registration must never be for publicity, for the idle curious seeker, but to bring to themselves and the cause a spirit of universal helpfulness.

For the West, is needed a spirit of enlightenment upon these lines, where the conditions are peculiar, and where the field of labour is indeed great. An important subject follows the first months of instruction; and that is desirable employment for these patients. Outdoor life being necessary, carpentry, metal work, canvassing, light expressage, or teaming, junk-peddling, or collecting seem to be most favourable. It has been found in the west that the consumptive often has to accept such reduced wages that his living conditions greatly counteract the beneficial influence of the climate. Societies have been formed to meet this condition. For instance, patients leaving the Jewish National Hospital are looked after, and suitable employment found when possible, and a movement is now started to teach them trades.

A young woman, leaving a Sanatorium, found her progress retarded by the carrying of heavy trays while engaged as waitress. Undesirable occupations found by visiting nurses, are, cooking, fruit-peddling, tailoring, mining, butchering, sales-lady, and school teaching. All work relating to the consumption of food, and in this connection truck gardening should also be heartily condemned. A patient suffering from tuberculosis of the hip was found by a Colorado visiting nurse in a very unhygienic home. It was clearly seen that remodelling the house was not possible, so the front porch was created into a sleeping room, by means of a sanitary couch, heavy oilcloth, and several yards of mosquito netting. The oilcloth was tacked part way up upon the outside, ensuring privacy from the public highway; and the mosquito netting placed over a barrel hoop, and attached to the ceiling, forming a protection from flies. This patient became so devoted to fresh air that she was not willing to return

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