

work of the first importance, and ought to be recognised equally with that of those who stand more prominently in the limelight.

We prove the quality of our patriotism by our capacity for personal sacrifice. In the fields, where there are few workers, in our Poor Law Infirmaries, amongst the very poor in the district—where the women and children are in pain—there may be scope for blessed drudgery of real national value.

We should make sure at this time of stress that we are carrying up tea trays where they are most needed.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT IS PREVENTIVE NURSING, AND HOW CAN IT BE EMPLOYED FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMUNITY?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Katie O'Sullivan, Nurses' Home, Manor Road, Chatham.

PRIZE PAPER.

Preventive nursing is that important branch of nursing which aims, broadly speaking, at the arrest and prevention of disease. It is closely associated with the science of hygiene, or preventive medicine, and to obtain the best results they must be worked in conjunction.

Public bodies have begun to realize within recent years that preventive nursing is necessary for the wellbeing of the nation, and to take steps accordingly. The work, however, is as yet in an early stage of organization, and no doubt a few more years will see its activities much widened. One of its most important and best-known branches is the preventive treatment of tuberculosis, both in dispensaries and by means of home visiting. Here, not only are steps taken to arrest the disease in the individual patient, but, more important still, the homes are visited and the spread of the disease prevented.

Much preventive work can be, and is being done, amongst prospective mothers and newly-born babies by Schools for Mothers, Babies' Welcomes, Infant Clinics, &c., but, to be effective, home visiting by competent and interested nurses must play a large and important part—in fact, by far the greater part. The lectures received at the schools are soon forgotten unless they are followed up by the visits of a trained but not too "official" nurse.

In school nursing also much good preventive work can be done, by attention to minor ailments, to cleanliness, and to the early recognition of infectious and other diseases. Here, again, who so competent as the trained nurse?

For preventive nursing in general, no branch of the profession affords greater opportunities than district nursing, as the district nurse spends more time in the homes, and has greater opportunities for getting in touch with the people than almost any other nurse. Opposed to this, however, is the fact that she is often too busy performing actual nursing duties to be able to devote much time to preventive nursing, however anxious she may be to do so. But even the busiest district nurse does a certain amount of preventive work, often quite unconsciously. Her anxiety with regard to her patient will prompt her to suggest improvements in the ventilation where necessary; she also advises the use of antiseptics and disinfectants, and the burning of all soiled dressings—herself setting the example, which is well known to speak with a much louder voice than precept. And what a chance she has to admire the baby! Surely no district nurse, even though working at breathless speed, could omit this important ceremony. And then, on a less hurried day, what more natural than to inquire how and when he is fed, and perhaps to observe how much better it would be to feed him after his bath instead of before. He may even be induced to discard his "dummy," though that is far from being an easy matter, for did not his grandmother bring up every one of her eleven children, and keep them quiet, with the "dummy"? Often the nurse is the first to notice the coming measles, and to advise the proper steps to be taken.

When the time comes for the grandmother to take to her bed, the district nurse has an opportunity of demonstrating—often to two or three admirers—how bed-sores are prevented, and thus very useful knowledge is spread, and an amount of unnecessary suffering prevented.

With the dying consumptive patient and his friends, who is likely to have more influence than the district nurse? For she not only gives advice—she does the work, and leaves a lasting impression on the minds of the friends. The district nurse is also often the first to be told about "growths" or suspected "growths," "bleeding," &c., and by giving advice to see a doctor at once, may be the indirect means of prolonging a patient's life. The trained nurse-midwife has, of course, unlimited scope for preventive nursing, as there seems to be still some left of the type of "nurse" immortalized by Dickens, though they are, perhaps, to be found now acting more in a "friendly" than in a "professional" capacity.

Preventive nursing will be more thoroughly carried out when the appointment of nurses to

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