

thankful, and our professional press, we have learnt much of the progress and activities of nurses in other countries, and to the United States of America belongs the honour of establishing Hospital Social Service on the lines of an interdependent, indispensable aid to medical diagnosis and treatment. There can be little doubt that the invaluable work of the District Nurse in our own country, as well as in the States, demonstrated the need for Hospital Social Service. In "A History of Nursing" we read: "Hospital Social Service was first placed upon a basis of distinct speciality at the Massachusetts General Hospital." The writer of this article has had the privilege of seeing the working of this well-nigh perfect and most comprehensive scheme of Hospital Social Service. One among many things which are very noticeable with our American cousins is, that they act—in respect of nursing affairs, which is the question at issue—on the principle that mediocrity is a crime to the enlightened mind. Progress is *real* progress with them. As soon as one measure of development is achieved, they are ready for another. They don't stultify their own efforts with the self-satisfied—or shall we say timorous?—remark, that we seem often to have heard, namely, that the State, or the Country, "is not ready" for this or that reform, or measure of progress. They never seem to be—what I should like to call—professionally self-satisfied. They are never *quite* satisfied with present conditions; it is always with them: "Onward, keep the march of time." This probably explains why the Hospital Social Service Department of the Massachusetts General Hospital is such a model one.

Anticipating the question (which, if I remember rightly, has already been asked me), "What is Hospital Social Service?" I will answer it in the words of Miss Ida M. Cannon, Head Worker and Organizer of the Social Service Department in the hospital mentioned above. She has written a very interesting book upon the subject, and she justifies the existence of this Department by saying, "As hospital problems are social as well as medical, two expert professions, not one *only*, are needed."

This means that in order that the doctor may be aided in his diagnosis and treatment, the social conditions under which the patient lives and works, must of necessity be known to him. To put the matter quite briefly:—If men or women seek medical advice as out-patients, and they happen to be living under conditions—whether of bad housing, or worry, or bad remuneration—which make good health an im-

possibility, a bottle of medicine won't put them right, neither will doles and patronage! The home must be visited, causes ascertained and removed, and the patient helped tactfully and kindly. Appalling ignorance is of course often revealed. The fundamental principle aimed at, is to help the patient to help himself. Our homage is due to the splendid institution of District Nursing, and to the shade of Elizabeth Fry, who was the first to initiate it in this country in about the year 1844. It is the prolific parent of many branches of social service. The genealogy is as follows: (1) District Nursing (parent). (2) School Nursing. (3) Tuberculosis Nursing. (4) Health Visitors. (5) Sanitary Inspectors. (6) Schools for Mothers, or Infant Welfare Centres (more than 800 centres). (7) Factory Nurses. All these and others we now regard as indispensable branches of Social Service among nurses. All these activities are, however, carried on outside the hospital walls. They have done excellent pioneer work, and they have, moreover, shown the necessity for the inter-dependence of medical and social treatment. "Each patient," observes Miss Cannon, "presents not only a medical problem, but a civil one as well." It is the recognition of this fact which has led to the establishment of Hospital Social Service as we have seen it on the American Continent. A term so suggestive of happy potentialities, that as we look along the vista of the future, we see such social conditions, as militate against the health of the Poor, and which Society has allowed—to its shame—to exist for so long, all removed, and future generations composed of healthier, happier people. Social Service implies a wide democracy, it is something effective, tangible, palpable. It implies solidarity and co-operation. Hospital Social Service is developing rapidly in the United States. It is reported that in 1911 forty-three hospitals were developing the system, there are now over a hundred (since 1905)!

In my next article, I hope to describe in detail Hospital Social Service as it is systematised and carried on in the Massachusetts General Hospital, which is its cradle, the beneficent results upon the community, and the valuable training which it affords to the Nurse.

BEATRICE KENT.

We regret to hear that the financial support given to some of our best country hospitals has been greatly affected during the past year. Mr. Frederick H. Pyman of 57, Bishopsgate has set a good example in dividing £2,000 amongst hospitals whose special claims appeal to him.

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