

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
THE NURSING RECORD

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No. 1,896.

JULY, 1926.

Vol. LXXIV

## EDITORIAL.

### THE PRINCIPAL ASSET OF A NATION.

The work of the Registered Nurse is an important factor in preventing, maintaining, and improving the health of the community from the cradle to the grave, and indeed in the ante-natal work which is now recognised as such an important factor in Eugenics. Consequently "An Outline of the Practice of Preventive Medicine,"\* a Memorandum addressed to the Minister of Health by Sir George Newman, K.C.B., M.D., F.R.C.P., Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health, just published, may with advantage be studied by nurses. It is a new edition of the Memorandum on some of the principal medical matters relating to the practice of Preventive Medicine first issued in 1919 to which a considerable amount of new matter has been added to the text, and the whole revised.

In his letter addressed to the Minister of Health which prefaces the Memorandum, Sir George Newman emphasises the fact that "The indispensable condition of the advance of any community is *health*," and that "The declaration of Herophilos, Greek philosopher and physician, remains true," that Science and Art have equally nothing to show, that Strength is incapable of effort, Wealth useless, Eloquence powerless, *if Health be wanting*."

The writer lays down as a fundamental principle of Medicine that its first duty is not to cure disease but to prevent it. In its simplest terms, therefore, the purpose of the science and art of Preventive Medicine is to apply human knowledge to the prevention of disease and its objects are as follows:—

(1) To develop and fortify the physique of the individual and thus increase the capacity and powers of resistance of the individual and the community.

(2) To prevent or remove the causes and conditions of disease of its propagation.

(3) To postpone the event of death and thus prolong the span of man's life.

Furthermore, Sir George Newman points out that "the spirit and purposes of Preventive Medicine must not be confined to sanitation or the 'public health' alone, but must pervade and inspire all branches of Medicine. For it is concerned with the causes and conditions of disease, which must be sought and known, then brought under control; in achieving this, or attempting to achieve it, Preventive Medicine must

define and secure the maximum of those conditions of life for the individual and the community which are the frontier defence against disease, and establish the foundations of sound living. For the health and physique of the people is the principal asset of a Nation, as disease is its principal liability."

### THE JUBILEE OF THE ROYAL SANITARY INSTITUTE.

"Where there is no vision the people perish," and never was this more true than in the case of the Royal Sanitary Institute the headquarters of which are at 90, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1, which is this week celebrating its Jubilee.

Little accounted of when it began its beneficent career in 1876, enrolling only 100 members during its first year, it has exercised a far-reaching influence on the health and life of the community, and now has some 5,000 members.

At the Inaugural Address to the Congress convened by the Institute, given by the Right Hon. Neville Chamberlain, M.P., P.C., Minister of Health, in the Guildhall of the City of London, on July 5th, a message from the King, its Patron, was read by the President, the Duke of Northumberland, in which His Majesty offered his "hearty congratulations on the useful and beneficent results of the work achieved during the past fifty years by the Institute."

Mr. Neville Chamberlain emphasising the value of the Public Health Act of 1875, which he said stood as the foundation of our Public Health Legislation stated that in 1876 the general mortality rate per thousand living was 20.9, in 1925, 10.7. In the same year the infant mortality rate per 1,000 infants under 1 year was 146, in 1925 it was 75. The reduction of deaths from diseases which lent themselves to control by measures of public health had been astounding; some, like typhus and cholera, had practically been entirely overcome, while in others like enteric fever, malaria, scarlet fever, diphtheria, and tuberculosis very great reductions had been effected.

The Institute had played a great part in the past in educating public opinion, and the need for that education was greater than ever. He could express no greater hope than that the records of the Institute for the next fifty years would show as rich a harvest of good work as those of the past half-century.

We nurses do not forget that our Great Law Giver, Florence Nightingale, O.M., was a keen sanitarian, indeed most of the principles which she laid down are quite up-to-date at the present time. We shall do well to study, inculcate, and practise them.

\* Published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, Adastral House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2, or to be obtained through any bookseller. Price, 1s. net.

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