

paid in tuberculosis and cancer, and we lose far too many of our mothers in childbirth every year. He strongly insisted that Prevention must be the great watchword of all our Health Services.

In the work of Prevention nurses bear an honoured part, notably in disseminating a knowledge of hygiene and dietetics, in advising that medical practitioners should be consulted in cases of incipient disease, in detecting and reporting cases of zymotic disease, by which means epidemics may be averted, and in many other ways. A shining example of good work done in connection with Prevention is that of Queen's Nurses and School Nurses throughout the country. Its value should be increasingly recognised both by public authorities and the community at large.

The New Jersey Mosquito Commission announces that a large quantity of gambushias (small fish imported from Florida and the Panama Canal zone) have been released in various New Jersey streams to prey on mosquito larvæ.

THE CARE OF THE SICK IN PEACE AND WAR FROM ANCIENT TIMES.

BY C. J. S. THOMPSON, M.B.E.

The beginning of human efforts to relieve the sick and wounded in times of peace and war, goes back to an early period of the world's history. In ancient Egypt some 2,000 years ago before the Christian era, the sick were often carried to the temples and laid before the statues of certain deities who were invoked and besought to heal them of their sufferings. In Babylonia in early times, they were sometimes laid near the gates of the cities, where they could be seen by strangers and others who might be able to help them.

In ancient Greece, they sought the temples of Æsculapius the deity of medicine, where they were placed in the outer courts for the ministrations of the priests of healing and so that they might be licked by the sacred serpents. On recovery, it was customary to place a gift or votive tablet in the precincts recording their cure.

Homer states that at the time of the Trojan wars, about 1300 B.C., some provision was made to relieve those stricken on the battlefield, and a special class of men were trained to cut out and draw forth darts, swords and lances from the wounded soldiers. They washed their wounds with tepid water, and after sprinkling them with soothing drugs, applied bandages and administered restorative medicines. These men are said to have also had a knowledge of styptic and narcotic herbs, by means of which they were enabled to stop bleeding and to relieve pain. Although the ancient Greeks had no field hospitals, it is stated that the tents of the soldiers were used for the reception of the sick and wounded.

Cyrus, the great general and founder of the Persian Empire in the year 520 B.C., not only provided his army with the most skilful surgeons he could get for his own men, but ordered them to look after the wounds of the enemy as well.

The Spartans had also a medical military service, and by one of their laws, the surgeons were ordered to retire to the rear of the right wing during battle. Xenophon of Cos, 290 B.C.; tells us that the surgeons of the Spartan army shared the same tents as the priests, the minstrels, and any volunteers who might accompany the expedition. They also knew that by encircling the limb with a ligature, they could arrest the flow of hæmorrhage. There is no record of ambulances at this time, and the wounded were probably carried on the backs of their comrades.

As the arrow and the spear were the chief weapons used in warfare in those days, it is natural we should find frequent

mention of the wounds caused by them in the writings of the early historians. Quintus Curtius gives an account of the extraction of an arrow from the chest of Alexander the Great by the surgeon Critobulus, and that it must have been a frequent operation is evident from the fact that the Greeks and Romans used forceps of bronze for extracting arrows and darts that had become embedded in the body.

The foundation of hospitals dates from about 252 B.C., when there is record that the Buddhist King Azoka founded a hospital in India for men and animals. Originally they meant a place where strangers or visitors were received and were not confined to the relief of the sick and infirm.

It is not until the early centuries of the Christian era that we have the first record of the establishment of houses for the sick, when St. Basil of Cæsarea founded a hospital in the city of Cappadocia in the year 369. It is described as being the size of a city, with streets and buildings for different classes of patients, and houses for the physicians, and attendants.

Sozomen, the historian, gives an account of a famine in Edessa in Syria, at the close of the fourth century, which was followed by a terrible epidemic. Struck by the sufferings of the people, Ephraim, the hermit, came forth and upbraided the wealthy citizens for allowing the poor to die. Responding to his appeal, many of the rich contributed and asked him to distribute their gifts to alleviate the sufferers. He therefore ordered three hundred beds to be fitted up in the public porches, and thus attention was given to all who were sick.

A hospital was founded at Alexandria in 610 by St. John the Almsgiver, and others were established at Constantinople which became a centre for institutions for the sick. Du Cange mentions thirty-five in the city alone, including one founded by St. Pulcheria, sister of Theodosius II, and another by St. Samson, near the Church of St. Sophia.

One of the earliest hospitals of which there is record in the west, is that founded by Fabiola, a Roman matron, about the year 400, who established in Rome a nosocomium for the sick whom she gathered in from the streets.

In France, the first hospital was founded by King Childbert and his wife at Lyons in 549. This was followed by the establishment of the famous Hotel Dieu in Paris, which is said to date from 660. Its origin is somewhat obscure, and is believed by some to have been started by Clothaire III, but by others its foundation is attributed to Landry, Bishop of Paris. It was originally a hospice for strangers and travellers similar to those attached to cathedrals and monasteries, but later on it was chiefly used for the sick poor and for soldiers wounded in battle.

Charlemagne made a provision for the care of the sick in the year 810, when he issued a decree that such hospitals as had fallen into decay should be restored, and one should be attached to each cathedral and monastery.

During the tenth century, the monasteries became a dominant factor in hospital work, and the famous Benedictine Abbey of Cluny set the example in France.

Besides its infirmary, each monastery had a hospital, and those in charge were obliged to seek out the sick and suffering in their neighbourhood and to try and relieve their wants. Thus it became a centre for the relief of the diseased and maimed. The great hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, in Siena, was founded in the ninth century by Soror, who drew up its first rules. It is still in existence and its charitable work is carried on as it was centuries ago.

Of the various monastic orders prominent in connection with hospitals, the most important at this period was that of the "Holy Ghost," through the instrumentality of which, institutions for the relief of the sick were established in most of the principal cities in Europe.

About the year 1150, Guy of Montpellier opened a hospital

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