Address.

THE NURSE AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH.*

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WITH honors that are accorded few men and fewer women, a few months ago England laid one of her daughters to rest. In the great Cathedral of St. Paul, a vast assembly knelt reverently as the Church gave thanks to God "that the sorrows and sufferings of his servant Florence were over." England lost a great patriot, the world lost a great humanitarian and a great teacher of sanitation and hygiene. And the shadow that always falls with the passing of a great soul was deepened for us in the United States, for only a short time before we had lost a disciple of Miss Nightingale, a great teacher and to some of us more than a teacher, a much-needed counselor and a dear friend. Death did not come to her gently at twilight, but in the full vigor of a splendid womanhood, with a suddenness and harshness to which it seems difficult to be reconciled; she was torn from the home she loved and the children who needed her, and hurled into eternity. At this very time there lay on her desk the opening lines of one further effort to present to the public the subject so near to both,—the Education of the Nurse. She was to have read this paper at the exercises in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the first training school for nurses by Florence Nightingale.

The Crimean War and a grateful English public produced the systematized course of training for nurses that Miss Nightingale had already voiced the need of, "the essentials of which," she says, "may be shortly given thus:

(a) "That nurses should be technically trained in hospitals organized for the purpose.

(b) "That they should live in homes fit to form the moral lives and discipline."

How almost with bitterness she must have realized what such schools would have meant to her country when with her little band of forty nurses she faced that awful barracks hospital of Scutari, of which it is written that "when it had in it 2,400 patients, the rows of beds ought to have been $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles long, but so great was the overcrowding that the length must have been much less, perhaps only two miles long." They said it was her modest nature that made her shrink from the welcome of her appreciative countrymen and steal back unrecognized to Lea Hurst. I think it was not that; modest she was, but I think she could not face rejoicings and adulations with that terrible tragedy still haunting her—"Those lives, those lost lives," wrote Kinglake, in a burst of sorrow, "that timely care might have saved."

A great public health movement has recently swept over the country. A public aroused to the importance of the national health are investigating social evils that are producing crime and disease,

that are depleting the population through infant mortality and limiting its efficiency through mental defectives.

And each investigating commission's verdict echoes Kinglake's cry, "The lives, the lost lives, that timely care might have saved," and what England needed then in time of great war, the whole world is asking for to-day in times of peace,—a body of trained workers to be the household guardians of the public health, teaching sanitation and hygiene in the homes, the schools and the institutions. To-day we have the training schools that Florence Nightingale hoped for, over 1,000, with 200,000 hospital beds and 29,000 pupils, but are not these 29,000 pupils trained for the individual need of the institution rather than for wider service of the state? A study of any group of institutions in the United States would bear this out. A recent comparison of the statistics of 125 hospitals shows the division of services to be approximately thus: 70% surgical, 20% medical and the remaining 10% to be divided between obstetrics and children, in favor of the former. A few have affiliated for obstetrics, and fewer still for pediatrics. A few have made some attempt at the preliminary course, by which we mean the essential theory with instruction in the simpler nursing procedures preparatory to the daily practice in the wards, a preparation that has long been deemed essential and struggled for by teachers of nursing and whose contention is sustained by our leading superintendents of hospitals recently studying in its broader aspects the education of the nurse. But so limited is the housing capacity, indeed, so often overcrowded is it, and so difficult is it to provide for the expense of needed additional supervisors and teachers, that I think but few institutions could establish such preparatory courses if they would. All this simply goes to prove that the hospitals are training the nurses for hospital work, and yet the greatest need of the country is for intelligent nursing in the homes. The hospital that trains the nurse in surgery is doing service for that hospital mainly and is doing a minimum service for the state. The same is true of the hospital that trains strictly in any specialty, whereas the state needs nurses trained and experienced in all phases of nursing.

On the other hand, we may ask in defense of this procedure of the hospital, Is it reasonable in these days of scientific advancement, requiring so much more thorough and comprehensive preparation of the nurse for public service, to lay this burden on private institutions? Certainly not beyond the point of equal service rendered. Is it reasonable for the state to expect a uniform result in any profession when the preparation of the members of such profession is left with each individual school, to be determined by whatever that school has to offer? It is not strange that a horizon dependent on a single point of view is somewhat narrowed, as the following anecdote, one of many, demonstrates: Contending recently for a broader training of the pupils in an institution whose service was almost wholly surgical, I was

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told that the thorough training in surgical technic in an institution in which the equipment and administration was evidently above criticism more than prepared the nurse for all the medical work for which she would ever be called; that with our present excellent sanitary conditions, typhoid was a thing of the past; and I almost believed it, until, a week later, when in a town less than ten hours away, an inquiry as to the proportion of medical cases to surgical elicited the information that while the proportion was ordinarily 1 to 2 in favor of surgery, this year the former had been greater, owing to the epidemic of typhoid fever during the summer that had filled all of the medical beds and many of the private rooms. But if the institution cannot bear the burden of the broad education of the nurse, where shall we place it? Why not upon the state? Has the state that looks after its public schools, its teachers, its highways and its waterways, its fish and forestry, no responsibility in the preparation of its sanitary teachers? Could it not and should it not provide, if not in colleges, in the secondary schools, a preparatory course for those who would be nurses, courses that would be taken by every girl and woman who is wise. Miss Nightingale, preaching the Gospel of Prevention, said this fifty years ago:

"If the laws of health, as far as regards fresh air, cleanliness, light, etc., were taught to mothers and schoolmistresses (as well as nurses), would this not prevent some children being killed, some evil being perpetuated? On women we must depend, first and last, for personal and household hygiene — for preventing the race from degenerating insofar as these things are concerned. Would not the true way of infusing the art of preserving its own health into the human race be to teach the female part of it in schools and hospitals, both by practical teaching and by simple experiments, insofar as these illustrate what may be called the theory of it?"

And should the state not go still further and require that every institution maintaining a nurse training school with a three years' (note the emphasis) course shall provide, and that every nurse seeking to pursue her profession shall give evidence of having had, a definite experience under qualified teachers in properly equipped departments in the care of the child, in the care of the mother, in the care of the medical case as well as the surgical, in the care of the insane as well as the sane. Not any one would deny, I think, that maternity cases cared for in general wards do not provide proper experience in obstetrics; that a few sick children even in a separate ward supplemented by an extensive course of lectures is not a course in pediatrics. No one will deny that a complete and modern operating room, an active service, bare wards and aseptic furniture that prohibit the patients having little personal comforts, even the necessary toilet articles, without the properly constructed and equipped accessory departments, such as diet kitchens, pantries, etc., as important for the health restoring and safeguarding of the patients as the drugs or dressing, are not teaching

fields, or rather they are teaching fields much to be deplored.

And if these limitations exist, as indeed they do, should not the state control, as it does in one country at least, and perhaps more, all institutions for the sick, making it necessary that evidence of sufficient funds to properly equip and maintain them shall be given, and wherever new institutions are being contemplated, requiring the submission of all hospital plans to a commission composed of hospital experts, one of whom shall be a nurse. I believe I am quite within the bounds of truth when I assert that thousands of dollars are spent yearly in trying to remedy, in recently constructed institutions, errors in construction and equipment that it is too late to ever wholly remedy, errors that the advice of such a board could not fail to avert.

And for our teachers, how are they prepared?

If there are 1,000 schools of nursing, there are at least 3,000 qualified teachers needed in these schools alone. There are 566 district nursing associations with 1,400 workers, every one of whom to make her work of the far-reaching value in the community that it might be should have had some further preparation than just her training at the bedside of the sick. The Division of Child Hygiene of the Health Department in New York City alone, and there should be such a division in every city in the land, employs 143 nurses, of whose preparation the same thing could well be said, if the conclusions of the Bureau of Municipal Research, which I quote in part, are correct:

"The possibilities of such a division, progressively and efficiently administered, are beyond prophecy. A marked reduction in infant mortality, a higher level of health and vitality among children who live, and greater efficiency of the school system due to the increased ability of children to benefit by their instruction — not merely the application of remedies, but the discovery of the causes and methods of prevention of physical defects and low vitality; these direct results may reasonably be expected and demanded. More remote and less demonstrable results may be hoped for in the way of increased industrial efficiency, of correspondingly decreased poverty and dependency, and of decreased truancy and delinquency that now too often lead to wasted or even criminal lives."

I think I am correct in stating that there is just one college, not in the United States, but in the whole world, that offers courses for the nurse educator. The Teachers' College of Columbia University opened its doors to nurses in 1900 and since then little groups of women, the largest class we have ever had, the present, numbering 32, have entered to prepare themselves to be administrators and teachers in training schools for nurses. With no endowments, mainly supported by contributions from nurses and a few of their friends, this little sub-department, called the Course in Hospital Economics, has struggled on. The appointment by Dean Russell in 1904 of the most brilliant of our teachers to a chair in the college, which was made to include our little course,

established it more firmly, and last year a public-spirited citizen in New York, Mrs. Hartley Jenkins, through a large endowment, made possible at last what had been hoped for all these years — a Department of Nursing and Health. We rejoiced that Mrs. Jenkins' gift came before Mrs. Robb was taken from us. As Miss Nightingale's personal experience in the little school at Kaisersworth and in the hospitals of Paris confirmed her belief in the systematized course of training for nurses, so Mrs. Robb's actual experience as a teacher and as an organizer of two schools of nursing convinced her of the necessity, if the pupils were to be efficient and the organization effectual, of a definite preparation for the more advanced service of administration and teaching. Above all other departments of nursing, this was her child; from its inception to the day she died, she fought and worked and prayed for it. It was a teacher's bequest to her profession, and she could have no more fitting memorial than the scholarship fund that is being raised by the nurses throughout the country to make possible with so much less struggle and hardship the preparation of our women for the administrative and teaching positions that so badly need them. We would wish that the response to this tribute should come not only from nurses, but from every citizen interested in institutions for the sick and in the social welfare, and that every board of trustees would feel it possible to make a contribution that would insure the preparation of one or more of their graduates for executive work. We ask this, as Mrs. Robb did, for the public, not the nurse.

And now above all, what is our last and greatest need which cannot be met by endowments, and for which I fear there is no appeal to the state?

In an eloquent address in behalf of the Citizen Army Bill, for the home defense, Lord Roberts said "that every man should esteem it an honor to help in the defense of his country; every woman should feel that the children given to her are at the disposal of her country."

Our country needs her daughters, and I fear our mothers are withholding them. Would they say that the life of the nurse is a life of sacrifice, I would reply that the healthiest, happiest women I know are nurses. Would they say that they cannot submit their children to the severity of the preparation, I say to-day what those upon whom the doors of their alma mater are closing to-night will say to-morrow that "the happiest and most satisfying hours I have known in my whole life were spent in the wards of the hospital in which I took my training." If they would shield them from the knowledge of suffering and evil that such preparation involves, I would ask if any knowledge which will help the wonderful structure that God has given us as the container of his divine essence to better serve the state should be withheld from any man or woman.

There are diseases more devastating than any wars that might be prevented. There are eyes that are sightless that might have seen. There are clouded minds that call for the most skillful and intelligent ministration, that with such care

might be restored to lives of usefulness and to a normal vision. There are poor diseased bodies that must labor but which might be helped to have the healthy bodies that make labor a joy, not a curse.

Once more, her call sounds in our ears:

"The Son of God goes forth to war.
Who follows in His train?"

"Oh, daughters of God, why are there so few of you to answer?"

To you who have this evening become my professional sisters, I extend an eager welcome. Our need of you is very great, and all the greater because of the richness of your opportunities. It has been your privilege to come in daily contact with some of the greatest minds of the medical world, to serve in an institution broad in its policies, thorough and comprehensive in its instruction, complete and modern in its equipment. You have been placed under a superintendent to whom no higher tribute could be paid than to say that she counted neither time nor cost in preparing herself to meet her great responsibilities; than to say to those of you who desire to prepare yourselves to serve in the institutions, as I earnestly hope some will, go and ask your superintendent not what you shall do, but what she *did*, and follow her example.

Your presence here to-night is evidence of the steadfastness of your purpose, of your fitness for the tasks that lie before you. The future is yours; go out, I beg, and demonstrate the highness of your calling and the value of your preparation. And if your trained eyes and hands and mind are but the servants of your heart, you cannot fail. Teachers you will be whether you will or no, whether the scope of your work is wide or limited; teachers whether by precept or by example. And who shall ever dare to estimate the value of, or limit the bounds of, the humblest example. Long after the textbooks that we have loved to teach from are replaced by ones more modern, the pupils of the training school will still bear the stamp of the splendid, joyful, living personality of their first head. The writings which alone should make their author immortal may lie untouched on dusty shelves, but the thousands of lamps lighted by the little lamp that broke the gloom of Scutari will never be extinguished. Remember that the greatest teacher that ever lived, before whom millions have bowed and said, "Master," wrote once only and that once in sand.

Original Articles.

FIBROUS STRICTURE OF THE RECTUM.*

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THE title, "Fibrous Stricture of the Rectum," has been adopted to distinguish all other constrictions of this organ from those due to neoplasm, whether malignant or benign; therefore, we shall

* Read at a meeting of the Boston Medical Library in conjunction with the Suffolk District Medical Society, Dec. 21, 1910.