The question of requiring registration of all new members admitted was discussed to some extent but was not acted upon.

MONDAY EVENING SESSION, MAY 1, 1916

SUBJECT: RED CROSS WORK

Jane A. Delano, chairman of the National Committee on Red Cross Nursing Service, opened the meeting with a review of the Red Cross activities during the year, and also an account of the origin and progress of Red Cross work, beginning with the Mississippi floods during the Taft administration in 1909, up to the present time.

HOW A SOUTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY PROVIDES FOR
SANITARY INSPECTION

By SARAH M. F. BABB, R.N.

Having received an appointment from the American Red Cross Town and County Nursing Service, it was my good fortune to be sent to Greenville South Carolina, in response to a call from the Children's Charity Circle, a local club of twenty young matrons devoted especially to the welfare of children and the inauguration of a broad and general health campaign.

After several days' study of local conditions, plans were formulated for our proposed work. It was wisely determined by becoming a part of, loyally supporting and working with the City Health Department, most effective work could be done, especially as the work upon which we had entered was largely public health education. The chief health officer entered cordially into the proposed plan and I was appointed sanitary inspector and nurse for the City Board of Health, the City Council making an appropriation to the Children's Charity Circle which is affiliated with the American Red Cross and is directly responsible for the salary of the nurse.

It is significant and beautiful, but characteristic of the awakening of the women of the south, that a club of only twenty women, solely a social club, idly chatting over tea cups on the broad piazzas of luxurious and elegant homes, with all the charm and vivacity and fascinating manners that have come to them by right of heritage from a long line of beautiful and gracious southern mothers, aristocrats from their profoundest consciousness to the tips of their dainty boots, should have heard the call of the poor and have set about trying to relieve their suffering and throwing themselves with earnest ardor

and devotion into a work the broadness of whose scope they did not at that time faintly conceive. Equally significant of the times was the response of the men who govern Greenville, sharing with them the responsibility, learning conditions as they existed and setting themselves to remedy them, doing all in their power to forestall the evils that threatened.

The humanitarian standard of any people can be fairly estimated by the care given the indigent and dependent classes; certainly never in any town has there been such an awakening of the public conscience, never any town more united in its charities, all charity organizations working together with the most perfect harmony. The Charity Aid devoted to outdoor relief, the Children's Charity Circle, with its Junior Branch, the Anti-Tuberculosis League, the Salvation Army, the Greenville Woman's Club, though separate and distinct in organization, yet coöperated with and supplemented the Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Health, and the City Council to form one complete harmonious body, working for the common good. The interdependence and close relationship is made peculiarly and strikingly evident and is really strengthened by the reports which the nurse is called upon to make monthly to the American Red Cross, to the local committees of the Children's Charity Circle, the City Council, through the Board of Health, frequently to the Charity Aid, to the officer of the Salvation Army, who is their investigator, and to the Anti-Tuberculosis League, familiarizing each distinct organization and the city authorities with conditions and how they are being met, largely eliminating waste and making practically impossible overlapping or duplication of effort.

The nursing problem was met by briefly outlining the work of the nurse to include: (a) the prevention of infant mortality; (b) tuberculosis, (c) sanitary inspection of washerwomen.

The work of prevention of infant mortality is the usual infant welfare work being done by boards of health in all our larger cities, comprising the supervision of babies from birth until one year old. The mother is instructed in the proper care of the baby. If the baby is breast fed, the mother is taught personal hygiene, the proper selection of food to increase the quantity and quality of the milk, the importance of an abundant supply of fresh air and sunshine, disinfection of baby clothes, and keeping flies from the baby. If artificially fed, lessons are given in the preparation of food, care and handling of milk in the home, the necessity of a pure milk supply, cleanliness and attention to the bottles and everything that comes in contact with the baby's food. Each baby under supervision is visited and weighed as often as

possible and an accurate record is kept of its growth. Every effort is also made to reach the expectant mothers, instructing them as to general health and hygiene, proper food and rest, emphasizing the importance of breast feeding and of the engaging of a physician early. Supplementing this work of the Board of Health a clinic for children was inaugurated. This clinic is a concrete example of our spirit of coöperation. It is held in the Salvation Army Citadel in conjunction with the physician in charge and the Salvation Army, which houses the clinic and fills the prescription. Generous friends contribute certified milk daily, the Junior Charity Circle composed of debutantes, loans ice boxes, and contributes ice and milk to sick babies. Occasionally, when the destitution is most extreme, it supplies baby layettes and bed linen from the loan closet. Recently for the same afternoons of the week, in the Salvation Army Citadel, an eye, ear, nose and throat clinic has been opened with one of our leading specialists in charge, with an average monthly attendance of forty.

Tuberculosis work consists in the education of the masses as to how consumption is communicated, cured, and prevented. Tubercular patients are visited in their homes, and are advised as to the importance of rest, food, fresh air and the precautions that must be observed by them and the family to prevent spread of the infection. Disinfectants and sputum cups are distributed and sometimes milk and eggs are given when patients are unable to procure these for themselves. The Charity Aid, with its outdoor relief work, finding imperative the need of a place and care especially for the indigent tubercular cases, built and equipped a small tubercular camp. Though admirably supplying a need, they thought it wisest to discontinue this work, turning over the equipment and a snug little bank account to the Greenville Anti-Tuberculosis Society, with the Chairman of the Board of Health as president, and the Commissioner of Health as secretary-treasurer. An active anti-tuberculosis campaign was inaugurated, a survey of the city made, with a spot map showing the location of the disease, with the result that subscriptions were given and a sanatorium with a capacity of twenty beds has been completed which is successfully caring for patients.

Sanitary inspection of washerwomen was also a duty assigned to me. An ordinance recommended by the Board of Health and approved by the City Council required all washerwomen to register and obtain from the Board of Health permits to take in washing. Inspections of washerwomen are made in reference to housing conditions, general sanitary conditions of premises, water supply and drainage, communicable diseases in the household, care in handling clothes,

scrubbing boards, ironing boards, pots and tubs, which must be of galvanized iron. Score cards are kept, as in dairy inspections, and to hold a permit premises, houses, tubs, etc., must be kept clean and any sickness in a family must be reported promptly to the Board of Health. The permit is withdrawn upon the failure of the holder to comply with all the provisions of the ordinance.

When it was announced that all washerwomen must register at the Board of Health Office, procure permits and be subject to inspection, wild excitement and great consternation prevailed throughout the various negro quarters, and on the day appointed for registration, the City Health Office was besieged with excited applicants. More than seven hundred came, and of all this number only one was white. For a while it seemed as though there would be a general revolt and strike among all the washerwomen. "Permit" was confused with "license" and "tax." One big aggressive negro woman indignantly raised her voice above the subdued murmur of discontent. "I sho does wish women could vote and put a stop to all dese foolish laws." Fortunately, having been brought up on a plantation in the far south and coming of a long line of slave holders, I had an insight into their point of view and I was able to make the most effective appeal to their pride and to their delight in orders and societies. Thus the permit has become a kind of certificate of membership into a great and important health movement in which everybody, both white and black, has entered. I made a house to house canvass of every negro home in the city, giving to each a copy of the ordinance and trying to tell as clearly as possible the reason for its enactment, not to discriminate against them, but to protect their health as well as the health of the white people. Every endeavor is made to teach these women the simple elements of sanitation and good health, showing them the relation between disease and dirt, and the menace from flies, vermin, and mosquitoes, which invariably breed and multiply in stagnant water and accumulated filth. Often their remarks at the end of my little speeches are not only excruciatingly funny, but very wise and pertinent.

Often, in the beginning, I find them regarding with supreme indifference the ban on the wooden tubs. In spite of my stern looks and frowns and threats of the police court, with all their native cunning they begin to disarm me, with "Now ain't she sweet. She sho is made purty." All unconsciously I begin to smile, unable to resent their soft and subtle flatteries, though I know there will quickly follow, "Miss when you gits done wid dat blue dress, remember me."

One day I sat down on a "wash bench" in a yard explaining to a group of washerwomen why wooden tubs should not be used and told

simply the story of malaria, how they get chills and fever. All listened with breathless interest. I felt particularly flattered by the close attention given my story by an old-fashioned "auntie" with a hand resting on each fat hip and her white turbaned head nodding from time to time in grave assent. When I had finished she looked around and said slowly to the others: "Now jess listen at dat. Cain't white folks git up lots of foolishness." And to me: "Mistis, I been borned by the wooden wash tub and I'se an old nigger and I ain't never died yit on account of dirt." This fact was indisputable and I could do nothing but close the argument with a laugh. Another said, "Miss, what you gwine ter do ter perfect us from de white folks' dirty clo's?" This, though meant as an impertinence, was most pertinent, as on the next day I was called to see a girl in the last stage of pulmonary tuberculosis with a complication of tertiary syphilis. She was a most ignorant and careless tubercular patient, coughing continuously and expectorating indifferently. In addition to this she was almost consumed with discharging ulcers. Her clothes were being given to a washerwoman without any previous disinfection. In my monthly report to the Board of Health this case was brought to their notice and it was recommended as a protection to the washerwomen and to minimize yet further the spread of all communicable diseases, especially tuberculosis and specific diseases that all clothing put out to wash from households where such diseases exist be required to be first thoroughly disinfected.

I know of no measure of such extraordinary and practical value in the control and prevention of communicable diseases as the ordinance regulating washerwomen. I was sent to inspect the house and premises of one woman who applied for washing and found her ironing and laying freshly ironed clothes on the bed where her son, far advanced in tuberculosis, lay. Again, I was sent to a home to find the mother suffering from an acute gonorrheal septicemia and a baby two months old almost blind with gonorrheal ophthalmia. A girl of fourteen at night took care of this sick mother and sore-eyed baby and during the day was nurse for a little white baby on a fashionable street. From this same house another girl was going out daily as waitress and maid. The remarkable and deplorable prevalence of tuberculosis among negroes, the rapidity with which they die of it, their bad housing conditions, the growing frequency of pellagra among them, and the almost general presence of specific diseases, make this law imperative both for them and for the protection of the white people; and it affords the most splendid method of educating the colored population in the laws of health and sanitation.

To their credit, since they have come to understand it, they have taken to it very heartily, and most of them are very proud of having a permit and of being registered washerwomen. Sometimes I wonder if I shall ever see them signing themselves Rose Johnson, R.W. (Registered washerwoman), just as I sometimes sign myself with a great deal of pride R.N. (Registered Nurse). The improvement in their homes and premises is very marked. Only one has had her permit withdrawn on account of a dirty house and yard, and they are very quick to report these delinquents who take in washing without a permit.

In order to meet the marvelously-increasing work with undreamed-of demands and alluring possibilities, our nursing staff has been increased and plans have been perfected, with the coming of our other nurse, to organize (taking our registered washerwomen as a nucleus), a colored women's club, with the President of the Greenville Woman's Club as president, and the nurse as health director. We hope to teach something of plain sewing, elements of home nursing, hygiene, first aid, care of children, and the fundamentals of dietetics and good housekeeping. We hope this will inevitably bring about better housing conditions, approximately a fairer living wage for the colored woman, increase her efficiency and opportunities for a better physical, mental and moral development. We have eight hundred registered washerwomen and with these organized and paying so small a sum as ten cents a month, we hope to stimulate them with the reasonable hope of having very soon a colored visiting nurse.

On account of a long attack of illness which kept me off duty more than three months, my work was somewhat demoralized. It was reported down in the quarters, "De lady what suspects us is daid." When I started to work again, I remembered in a certain neighborhood a woman who, the day before I was taken ill, I had found washing in wooden tubs. I gave her a good scolding, telling her she must immediately, right now, do away with those old wooden tubs and get zinc ones, telling her I'd come back next week to see if she had minded me. The days slipped into weeks from June until October, but when I started back to work I remembered her and went across the field, coming up in her back yard. Sure enough, there she was, bending over three big wooden tubs, all unconscious and forgetful of "de lady day suspects," happy as a lark, singing with the plaintive intonation and weird effect characteristic of her race, a favorite old revival song: "At de jedgment day, sheep on de right, goats on de left." When I walked suddenly up behind her and said, "Didn't I tell you not to wash in wooden tubs again?" she looked around quickly, her white eyes shining with surprise and terror. "Fore Gawd, Mistie," she exclaimed, "I heard youse done daid."

The governing board of the City Hospital is giving us its coöperation by placing under our direction the social service and hospital extension work of the institution. We follow up charity patients who, though practically too far recovered to require further hospital care, need to be kept under the supervision of a nurse and instructed as to diet and proper way of living. This also includes surgical dressings which may be done in the home by a visiting nurse, thus increasing the capacity of a hospital that is rapidly outgrowing its size.

It is in this way Greenville is solving her problem. All these varied duties make up the life of the Red Cross visiting nurse, who is called also the city nurse, the Salvation News and de Wash Lady, crowding as they do every minute of days too short with duties varied with humor and unspeakable pathos.

Following Miss Babb's paper came one by Fanny F. Clement on Town and Country Nursing Service, a portion of it being illustrated by moving pictures, and one by Dr. Oscar Dowling, on The Red Cross Nurse in Time of Disaster.

Miss Delano then introduced Miss Gladwin as a nurse who had volunteered for Red Cross service in 1898, who had served in the Spanish-American war, in Japan, in the Hudson-Fulton celebration and in the Ohio floods, before going to Servia.

EXPERIENCES OF A RED CROSS NURSE IN SERBIA

BY MARY E. GLADWIN, R.N.

I feel that I had a very great good fortune in going to Serbia. As Serbian unit No. 1, we went out from New York very early one day in September, after nearly all the company of nurses had sailed on the Red Cross ship. We went out on a Greek boat, and I might tell much of the condition of the boat and the life we lived while on it. We were four nurses, for example, in one cabin, and that cabin had been occupied by the ship's stewards who had been turned out in great haste that we might have it; four nurses with four duffle-bags and four dress-suit cases and four heavy coats and all other sorts of impediments. We were not the only occupants of our cabin; there were many others of all sorts. I shall never forget that first night on the Greek boat or all the things we saw. . . . From that time on we slept out on deck, even in times of great storms, when our steamer chairs had to be lashed to the deckhouse to keep us from going overboard.

We had a very bad passage across the Atlantic. I think perhaps