

CARING FOR THE SICK AND PREVENTING ILLNESS

SICK PEOPLE—*really* sick people—are lucky today if they can be cared for in a good hospital. There they can have the expert care of the best physicians and surgeons, trained nurses in attendance when needed night or day, all the discoveries and appliances of modern science and skill to find out what the matter is and put it right; a specially trained dietitian to see that they have the proper food—in short, every comfort and care needed to give the best chance for recovery.

The principles of modern hospital organization had their rise, through the genius of Florence Nightingale, out of the terrible sufferings of the Crimean War, as did the profession of nursing, without which the modern hospital could not exist.

A few years later the chemist Pasteur discovered the relation of germs to putrefaction, and the great surgeon Lister revolutionized operating room practice by the use of antiseptics. Almost every year since then there has been some advance, great or small, in medical science and hospital practice. And all of this is available to the poor as well as the rich.

Most general hospitals have free wards, semi-private wards, and private rooms for patients. There are hospitals operated by cities, provinces or states; there are army and navy hospitals; there are public hospitals founded by private endowment; there are public hospitals supported by churches, industrial companies, and fraternal organizations; and private hospitals for private patients of individual physicians and surgeons.

In the United States and the Philippines are some of the finest hospitals in the world. The American College of

Surgeons has attempted to "standardize" hospitals according to certain principles: adequate means of finding a diagnosis, that is, finding out what is the matter with a patient; the keeping of adequate records of treatment of patients and the results obtained; and other improvements.

A medical graduate is not granted, in most places, a licence to practise until he has spent a year or more as an intern in some recognized hospital, where he works under the supervision of the staff physicians and surgeons.

Most general hospitals conduct training schools for nurses. A good hospital usually gives good training.

Dispensary and out-patient work for patients not confined to bed is increasingly important in the general hospital. Pay clinics for people with small means who do not wish to accept free treatment have met a great need.

In addition to general hospitals, there are a number of hospitals devoted to special classes of diseases, such as children's diseases, tuberculosis, cancer, leprosy, etc. Sanitariums are for the residential treatment of chronic conditions.

However, we must not depend entirely upon hospitals to keep us well. We must practise the rules of hygiene at home, and prevent ourselves from going to the hospital as much as possible.

Hygiene deals with the causes and prevention of disease in their relation to the preservation of health. In this sense hygiene has been well named preventive medicine.

The advance of medical science, together with the spread of education, is teaching people to realize the necessity of personal and social hygiene.