

Where The Blue Of The Visiting Nurse Is Seen, Comfort Is Being ...

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Where The Blue Uniform Of The Visiting Nurse Is Seen, Comfort Is Being Carried To The Sick And The Helpless

This Plain Garb. With Its Snowy Collar And Cuffs. Has Come To Be Symbolic Of Service Rendered In The Most Ungrudging And Most Efficient Fashion Possible.

By EMILY EMERSON LANTZ.

TODAY, more than ever before, the American eye is accustomed to the sight of distinctive garbs. From the man wearing the khaki uniform of his country to the Sister of Charity in quaint mediæval habit, with its cornette, like the picturesque wings of a seagull, the pedestrian is constantly noting these distinctive dresses and recognizing the mission each one represents.

But how many are acquainted with the woman wearing a simple navy-blue dress, with white collar and cuffs, and with hat and wrap to match? This uniform indicates membership in the Instructive Visiting Nurse Association and these are the secular, twentieth century ministering angels upon whom the mantle of the convent-environed nurse of the Middle Ages has fallen.

It was 23 years ago, in the year 1896, that the Instructive Visiting Nurse Association was organized in Baltimore with a single nurse in charge. Her mission was to go from house to house where sickness was, lending an experienced, helping hand in homes too humble to afford the continued expense of a professional nurse, yet able and desirous of paying a small fee for professional services, and in families too poor to pay for services at all. In neither case did the nurse remain permanently. She rendered needed assistance, she instructed some member of the family what to do in her absence and passed on, but she came again as often as the patient required her aid—sometimes twice, sometimes thrice a day, or perhaps only once a day, or week. To nurse the sick with sympathy and gentleness has been woman's mission from earliest time; to nurse with professional knowledge, as well as sympathy and gentleness, is the professional nurse's mission today.

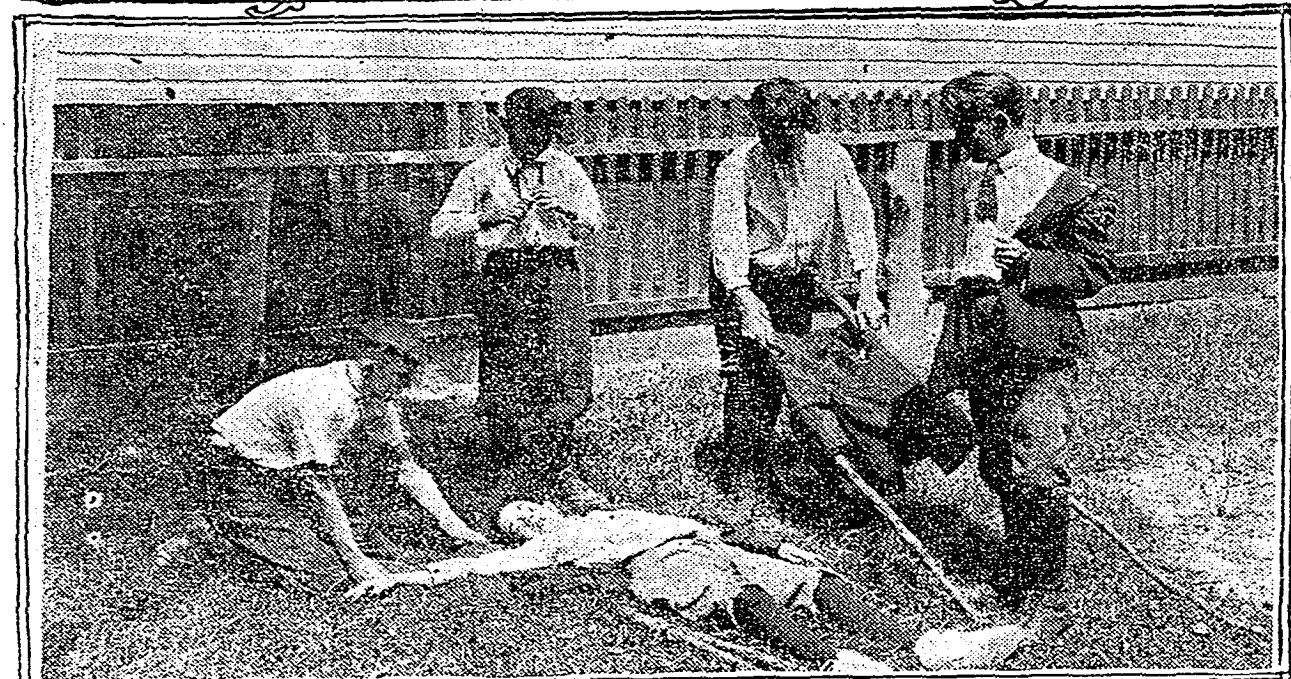
Fills Community Need.

The Instructive Visiting Nurse Association came into being in response to a very evident municipal need. With the vastly increased population of the city at the present time, that need is increased twenty fold, and twenty-two nurses, a superintendent of nurses and two supervising nurses, now form the association, which has become one of the most unique and efficient hospital services of the municipality. It is an organization giving splendid service at all times and which, during the influenza epidemic of last year, met a tragic crisis with heroic spirit, while one nurse, who contracted influenza, sacrificed her life to her mission.

The association is in fact a visiting hospital-service, with the whole city as its sick wards and its benevolent work extending to localities as distant as Cambridgeville, Ellicott City and Annapolis. Among its charges is Fell's Point Dispensary, supported by Christ Church. The Eccleston Memorial nurse of Locust Point district, is also provided by the association, which likewise provides a visiting nurse at Hampden-Woodberry. The nursing and dispensary work of Curtis Bay district, one of many activities at the Neighborhood House, supported by Brown Memorial Church, is also under association care. The Waverly Club, of that suburb, contributes to the support of a nurse in that district and aids materially in the carrying on of the work. Highlandtown district is one of the largest and busiest hospital wards of the visiting nurse, and she is partly supported there by St. Timothy's Alumnae Guild. The district Nurse's Helpers of Carroll-Irvington lead a band, and, in fact, as Aaron and Hur upheld the hands of Moses while Israel fought at Rephidim, so the strength of the visiting nurse has been upheld by all the associated charities and many of the benevolences of Baltimore.

Bertha R. Frank Gave Home.

The headquarters of the Association and home of the nurses to which they all return at night like homing doves is the large attractive residence at 1123 Madison avenue, which was given for this purpose by the late Mrs. Bertha Rayner Frank. The house was for many years Mrs. Frank's own residence and when she bestowed it as a gift to the Association, she presented also much of the beautiful furniture that adorned it. The former drawing room is used as an office, where, at a table extending almost the length of the room, each nurse has her own office drawer and writing equipment. In the house also is the loan



Above: Visiting Nurse Giving the Baby Its Morning Bath and Instructing the Mother How to Care For Her Child. Below: Schoolboys Learning the Methods of First Aid.

closet, supplied with every necessity of the sickroom from which the nurse can borrow for the use of any patient who does not possess them or can not afford to buy them. There is also the loan linen closet, for many times the visiting nurse finds lack of bed linen, or invalids without suitable bed clothing, while many babies enter the world for whom no layette, even of simplest kind, has been provided. These supplies are frequently loaned and often given outright when emergency demands them, and many charitable persons understanding the continual need of the association for such supplies, send to them the sheets that are wearing thin, the garments outgrown, the unneeded baby clothes of infants advanced to childhood.

Professional Standard High.

The professional standing of the Instructive Visiting Nurse Association is high. It belongs to the National Organization of Public Health Nursing, in which it ranks as 100 per cent. efficient, since its nurses, while drawn from any locality, must be both graduate and reg-

istered nurses. Miss M. Evelyn Walker, superintendent of nurses, is a graduate of the Polytechnic Hospital School of Nurses, while Miss Camasdel Shipley and Miss Mary Woolford, supervising nurses, are graduates of the Johns Hopkins School of Nurses. Miss Anna Dunick, secretary of the association, is also one of the most experienced and valued members of the association.

Perhaps one reason for the great success of the organization has been the spirit of unity that characterizes it as a working body. Among this group of earnest women loyalty and co-operation is believed to be the basis of efficiency and successful achievement. They are women deeply interested in their vocation and working sympathetically one with the other.

Her Little Kit Bag.

When the nurse leaves the home at 8 A. M. to return to it at 5 P. M., after an always busy and often strenuous day, she carries with her a small black leather kit, weighing, when packed, about 5½ pounds. This was designed by a

former member of the association and is a miniature pharmacy, containing almost anything she may need in her task of healing. There are five bottles containing diluted alcohol, mouth wash, cresol, aromatic spirits of ammonia and boracic acid crystals. There are two boxes containing boracic ointment and talcum powder. There is cotton, bandages, cord tie, gauze, safety pins, cord-dressing, sterile dressings, adhesive plaster, sterile gauze, thermometers, glass catheters, rubber catheter, rectal tubes, enema nozzle, silver probe, scissors, forceps, glass syringe, glass nozzle, spatulas for ointment, nail brush, towels, rubber gloves, instrument man and case, linen envelopes and the ever-essential nurse's apron.

She carries also a little traveling library, so to speak, that includes hospital admission slips, bedside charts and envelopes, district cards, directions for patients, list of hospitals and dispensaries and hours for same, forms for insurance policy holders, nursing manuals, rules for agents and nurses, day book and pencil, receipts for loans and

fees, standing orders, a city map and a street directory.

One little leather, carried by the nurse and given by her to the member of the family selected as the one to render first aid in carrying out the nursing instruction, reads as follows:

"Please have these things ready for nurse each day when she comes: kettle of boiling water, pitcher of cold water, two towels, one basin, soap in saucer, nail for waste water, clean bed linen, wash rag, old newspaper. Nothing must be kept under the bed. The room floor must be kept clean."

The nurse has a further mission, however, than actual nursing. She has rare opportunity for instructing the family, not only how to restore the sick to health, but also how to bring the environment to sanitary condition. Filled with gratitude for and appreciation of her ministrations, the family she visits is usually ready to accept her instruction and heed her admonitions. Day by day she preaches and practices the gospel of cleanliness and health, until both lessons are learned by many. In touch with physicians, with officers of the law and co-operating with the health and hospital agencies of Baltimore, she remedies insanitary conditions by appeal to the proper authorities. Through her influence necessary food is provided through the proper agencies. When patients must be sent to a hospital, she knows where to send them, and when, and sometimes provides the ambulance through a little emergency fund bestowed upon the association. When dire poverty is added to the scourge of disease she is quickly in touch with relief agencies, and through her even those mentally afflicted (and these are found

be many) are placed where they will have opportunity for possible mental restoration.

Sometimes the fate of an entire family rests upon the visiting nurse, and if beyond her own experience she needs the judgment of others, she has the supervising nurses and the superintendent of nurses to rely upon for advice, and there are frequent general conferences of the household of nurses to supply the knowledge she may possibly lack.

Her service may be requested by physician for invalid, by friend or community centre, by church circle or anyone, in fact, and she goes with equal sense of duty to the sick and suffering of any race or creed. Within the past year 14,547 patients were cared for by the visiting nurses and 60,455 visits were paid and bedside care given. When necessary, first rules in cooking were also given, and in every way the members of the association co-operate with other agencies in efforts to raise the health standard of the community.

For some time past the Instructive Visiting Nurse Association has given post-natal care to the University of Maryland outside obstetrical patients, also co-operating with the Mothers' Relief Society in its beneficent ministries to prospective mothers.

The board of directors of the Association includes the following: President, Mr. Ellicott H. Worthington; secretary and treasurer, Francis J. Le Moyne; Dr. Joseph S. Ames, Dr. J. Hall Pleasants, Jr., Mrs. W. W. Abell, Mrs. Douglass Burnett, Mrs. Harry C. Black, Mrs. W. Hall Harris, Jr., Mrs. Francis J. Le Moyne, Miss Fannie K. McLane, Mr. Henry P. Duker and Mr. William A. Parker.

And so, dear women, when you meet the woman in the simple navy blue uniform regard her with a smile—she deserves it. And, men, hasten to relinquish your seat in a street car to a

woman whose ministering hand you may some day need, for these are they who after "life's fitful fever," will be welcomed to Heaven by their risen Lord with the words: "I was sick, and ye visited me."