

Wide Choice Of Work

Outside Hospitals - By A Public Health Nurse

A FEW weeks ago there appeared in *The Listener* an article on nursing as a career. But this dealt almost entirely with hospital and institutional nursing, and implied that the summit of a career in the nursing service was the attainment of some hospital appointment such as that of Matron or Superintendent of Nurses. But perhaps only two out of every hundred girls who finish their hospital training are fortunate enough to attain to such a position.

At the conclusion of their basic training, many girls find that they do not want to continue with institutional nursing either in the public or the private hospital. For them there is to-day an ever-increasing choice of fields outside the walls of the hospital. The nurse has opportunities, if she so desires, of becoming a specialist in any particular part of the health field.

She may, first of all, take up private nursing. This provides a life full of

variety and interest, in that she can travel from one part of the country to the other on her way from case to case. She has a large measure of independence. She is free to go on holiday till inclination or economic necessity makes it advisable for her to begin another job. Once on the case, she is her own mistress, and hers is the full responsibility for the welfare of her patient. His recovery is the reward of her individual nursing skill. It is no wonder, therefore, that so many women prefer this branch of nursing.

Specialised Subjects

There is, however, increasing scope for the trained nurse in the public health field. A post-graduate course is provided by the Department of Health in various specialised subjects, such as Midwifery, Maternity, Nursing, Industrial Nursing, and other branches of the profession. The Department of Health appoints District

Nurses, and with the extension of the Social Security legislation, still more nurses are required for this type of preventive work. The District Health Nurse is a person of importance in the community. She is responsible for the health supervision and education of all age groups. Her work takes her into the home and the school. She carries out a complete health programme, including ante-natal and post-natal supervision, investigation of infectious diseases, and follow-up work with tuberculosis patients and their families.

Obstetric nursing is another branch of public nursing whose importance to the community cannot be over-rated.

Factories And Child Welfare

A new development in the public health field is the appointment of registered nurses to supervise the workers in factories, and to investigate the causes

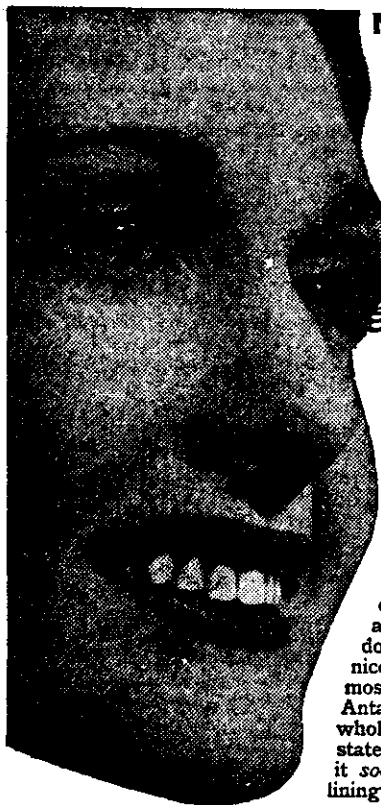
of industrial diseases. This has come into prominence in England during the present war, and steps are being taken in New Zealand to supervise our own factory workers.

Nurses have their place in many fields of social work, notably the field of child welfare. Here there is scope for individual and constructive work in securing normal adjustments, and in helping people in their struggle against ignorance, poverty, depression and physical handicaps.

Occupational therapy, a comparatively new field in which nurses may specialise, provides yet another sphere. This work consists in training the mentally or physically disabled in some occupation which will be of value to them and to others, and nurses specialising in the work will be needed to provide for soldiers invalided home from the war.

Finally, there is the field of dietetics. This provides opportunity for getting in on the ground floor in the fight against ill-health, and forms the very basis of the constructive programme for health in New Zealand.

These are but a few of the many avenues open to the nurse at the conclusion of her training.



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