

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES.

THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE TUBERCULOSIS COLONY,
PAPWORTH HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

By L. B.

HAVING had occasion to make enquiries about the above colony, I have received such an interesting account that I am sending a short synopsis for the journal, feeling sure there will be many, who may not know of its existence, who will rejoice to know there is such a place, where the burden of disease can be forgotten and a man be able to regain his health and become a productive worker, where also the home life can be retained and the consumptive be just an ordinary member of a thriving and hopeful community.

This colony was started in 1915 in the small town of Bourne and transferred two years later to Papworth Hall, in the grounds of which is now a village settlement accommodating 152 people in addition to the Central Institution and Hospital to which in 1922, 181 patients were admitted.

It constitutes a permanent provision for consumptives, some of whom will stay there for the rest of their lives.

Around the Central Institution have sprung up chalets and model cottages, hostels, workshops and recreation rooms and grounds,—in fact an industrial colony where a man is enabled “to regain and then retain his health, to become at the same time a productive worker, to maintain himself and to provide his family with the necessities of life.”

In his annual report of the Medical Director, Dr. Varrier Jones shows how slowly but surely the centre of gravity of the whole scheme has shifted. The Central Institution (with a few houses for its employees) is no longer the centre, instead there is a township with an institution for the treatment of disease which occupies the same relation to that township as a similar institution does in the outside world. “Instead of the ex-patient feeling himself a cypher in a sanatorium, he feels himself a member of a progressive and well organised community, looking at life through spectacles of an entirely different hue. ‘Our work during the last year has brought home to us more forcibly than ever the fact that in treating tuberculosis the “family” is the unit that has to be dealt with, that the reason of a wage earner’s breakdown is not due to any single cause, such as “working conditions,” but is a complex in which the family life is of the utmost importance. Whether in the middle-class home or the home of the general labourer, the same factors are found to exist, cramping the man’s opportunity to regain his health, frustrating his best endeavours, weighing him down with mental anxiety, and finally mental despair. All these factors, which are so potent in destroying the results of sanatorium treatment, are impossible to remedy in their entirety in the outside world.’

"Only in a settlement such as this, can the factors first of all be observed and then understood; it may be but partially as yet, and only under these conditions can they be remedied or eliminated. The consumptive's family is, as we have said, the unit to be dealt with. We waste money when we spend money on part of that unit, and part only. We have faced the position boldly at Papworth from the earliest days, with the astonishing result that in the village settlement, since its establishment until the present time, only one death has had to be recorded. When we consider that patients are accepted into the village settlement, irrespective of the extent of the disease, the record is sufficiently remarkable. The explanation is simple enough—the whole complex surrounding the consumptive has been taken into account, medical, social, economic, and last, but by no means least, the psychological. In the past our schemes have attacked but one of these factors, with a lack of success which we ought to have expected, and which we now, alas, deplore. In order that our work of dealing with the family unit should be on a still firmer foundation and even more thorough, we have now instituted a clinic for women and children. This clinic, fitted up with the essentials for carrying on the work, is complete with its medical and social service, and a special welfare fund, supervised by the matron, is invaluable for adjusting inequalities in the social status of the mothers. The next step forward is in contemplation, namely, a Papworth Insurance Scheme, which in time will ensure the independence of those who at present receive the help of the fund. I consider the gradual expansion and continuance of this work as one of the most important branches of work in connection with the village settlement."

The various activities are discussed under the headings of medical, economic and social:—

Medical.—Patients with pulmonary and surgical tuberculosis are received from all parts of the country, no one is refused so long as there be a bed.

Immediate medical aid is obtainable for those who should need it among their own community.

Artificial pneumothorax is practised where it is likely to benefit the patient. Active medical research work is carried on.

That all this is carried on by men and women specially skilled in this branch of healing, whose chief interest and concern is the welfare and progress of the colony, must make "assurance at being in the right hands," a potent factor in the process of regaining health.

Economic.—"The problem of how to prevent the ex-sanatorium patient from becoming an unbearable burden to himself, his friends, the state, is one of pressing importance and is not easy of solution. We have tackled the question by the erection of workshops in which all patients who are fit to do anything perform graduated tasks according to their strength, thus avoiding purposeless work and an aimless life and making it possible almost from the commencement of treatment to avoid that hopeless outlook in life which is too often the lot of the sufferers from consumption." These workers are

not only trained but are employed at a full Trade Union rate of wages, so that they are able to support themselves and their families. The Papworth industries is a live business concern and includes the following :—

Carpentry, joining, and building ; cabinet making, printing, poultry, farming, horticulture, sign writing, portmanteau and attaché case making, boot making and repairing, tailoring and hand-made jewellery. This latter affords light work for those well advanced in the disease who are able to do a little even in their beds.

Social.—"To describe the social activities of the colony would be like writing a history of a small country town for the last twelve months. I can only say the social activities are such as those which a normal and healthy community enjoys, avoiding to a very large extent that artificial excitement which is too often demanded by a modern community. The usual round of entertainments takes place, whist drives, concerts, as well as lectures by kind friends in the University, the whole forming a healthy method of recreation which seems to be highly advantageous."

Patients are first admitted to the hospital where they are under observation and treatment for a short period according to the extent of the disease, if they improve they are drafted from there on to the colony, *i.e.*, a group of open air shelters, from where they go to work for $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day, working at the trades mentioned. After six months the patients are eligible (1) if single men for the hostel, which is a step in advance, and where they work six hours a day ; (2) if married with a family they are given a house in the village, provided they are of a good character and sufficiently well to work in the workshops not less than six hours a day. All are paid wages after the first two months which covers the short period of training. The rate of pay differs according to the kind of work they are able to do. Women are admitted under similar circumstances, but so far there are no workshops, but work is done in the women's sanatorium, such as needle work and bag making. Children of both sexes are admitted. Insured persons are generally sent from their local Tuberculosis Officer and paid for by their local authority. If the patient be an ex-soldier he is paid for by the Pensions through the same channel. The charge is 49s. 7d. per week. Private patients are admitted at the same rate, but for a private ward there is a charge of three guineas per week.

Such is the glimpse one gets of this colony, which one hopes will soon be one of many. Sir Alfred Mond, in opening some new buildings last year, said it was the most wonderful institution of its kind in the world, since combined in one whole were sanatorium, hospital, village settlement and industrial centre.

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