

The Human Welfare Group at New Haven

A SERIES OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS OF A
NEW EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

VIII.

NURSING AND THE HUMAN WELFARE GROUP

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WITH the development of new attitudes in medicine, there have arisen new conceptions of the functions of nursing. As long as the interest of medicine was centered in the more or less well-developed manifestations of disease, in the attempt to alleviate suffering and patch up the injured physical organism, nursing could be looked upon as little more than a technical procedure requiring a minimum of intellectual and cultural attainment.

Medicine, and with it nursing, has gradually enlarged its viewpoint, however, and today looks at disease from the preventive aspect. The effort is made to discover the underlying causes of illness, and to change them in so far as possible in order that disease may not occur. Such an approach means increasing attention to the mind of man both because of its significance in relation to physical health and because of the importance of mental health in itself. Interest in physical and mental stability has in turn necessitated consideration of the economic and social conditions under which human beings live. Mind, body, and environment are related factors none of which can be understood apart from the others.