

thence into the exploration of space. The sociological revolution accompanying this progress is no less dramatic. A hundred years ago it was the unusual for children to know their grandparents. Now it is the usual for children to grow up with great-grandparents. Today in the United States one of every 11 persons is 65 years old or older. An examination of census figures over the past century indicates a strong upward trend in the proportion of older people to the total population. In 1850, people 65 years old or more represented less than three per cent of the population of our country. By 1900 this had risen to four per cent. During the next 50 years it doubled to eight per cent, and our census experts estimate that by 1975 10 per cent of our population will be 65 years old or older. In Maryland today, we have some 250,000 persons in this age category. This upward trend, the end of which is not yet in sight, has created some serious economic and social problems. Chief among these is the task of making these elderly people independent and self-supporting, sustaining them as active contributors to the life of the community and, of course, keeping them in good health. It is in this area that you as graduates in practical nursing will play a vital role in enriching the lives of these elderly people, and, in doing so, adding strength and vitality to the society in which we live. You are trained, according to the information I have received, to minister to both the physical and the mental needs of this important and growing segment of our population. And it goes without saying that you have been trained well and that you now have the capacity to perform a difficult task effectively. In this connection, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to an outstanding—and in fact truly remarkable—nurse and educator, Dean Gipe, of this University of Maryland School of Nursing. Since she came here to take charge of the school, Dean Gipe has labored indefatigably to increase and to improve the University's program for the training of nurses. The rating of the school itself and the caliber of nurses which it graduates each year demonstrate the fulfillment of her great design—to make the School of Nursing of the University of Maryland one of the best in this country. The curriculum in which you have been educated as practical nurses is the creation of her fertile and inventive mind. It is the product of the sound philosophy which she espouses—the philosophy that what is needed in the world outside should be taught in the school.

The demand for practical nurses grows with every passing year, and, as we have seen from our examination of the statistics on the aging, these demands will continue to grow for the foreseeable future. Dean Gipe looked out into this community, saw a need and set about