

trained in its use, or who work under Medical men who continue to adopt it, that a solution of carbolic acid, of the strength of one in twenty, corresponds to the one in one thousand solution of corrosive sublimate, and a solution of the strength of one in forty corresponds to the one in two thousand solution of corrosive sublimate, and that the rules I have laid down for the use of the one are equally applicable to the use of the other. Solution of permanganate of potash or Condy's fluid is another antiseptic that I still consider very useful. For ordinary vaginal douching after confinement, I believe there is nothing better, and it has for this purpose two undoubted advantages. In the first place, it is non-poisonous; and, in the second place, it indicates by returning with its colour unchanged when all foul matters have been removed.

I must remember, however, that I am not writing a manual, and I will not burden you with further details. My aim in introducing the subject was rather to expound principles than to lay down minute rules, and I fear I have already gone somewhat beyond my original intention, and trespassed too much on your patience.

There is still one other point upon which I should like to make a few observations before I conclude, namely, the prevention of blindness in the newly-born child. Newly-born children are liable, as most of you know, to a very severe form of inflammation of the eyes, called purulent ophthalmia. This disease, when once developed, runs a very rapid course if not promptly treated, and quickly destroys the sight. From inquiries made in 1884 by a committee of the Ophthalmological Society, it was ascertained that in the institutions for the blind in London, York, Belfast, and Hull, thirty to forty per cent., or one-third of the cases, owed their blindness to this cause, and the same is true of the inmates of the blind asylums of Germany, Austria, France, Holland, and Denmark. It has now been proved that this affection can be prevented by a very simple and easy precaution. If, when the Nurse washes the child for the first time after its birth, she soaks a clean linen rag, or a little cotton wool, in a solution of corrosive sublimate, one part in two thousand, *i.e.*, in a solution similar to that which she has been using for her hands, but made weaker by adding an equal quantity of warm water (say, a quarter of a teacupful of the one-in-a-thousand solution and a quarter of a teacupful of warm water), and, holding the eyelids apart with the finger and thumb, squeezes the antiseptic over each eye, so that the fluid runs well over the eyeball, the child will be saved from all risk of the disease. As an additional precaution it is also useful to wipe the child's eyelids the moment

it is born, and, if possible, before it opens its eyes, with a clean napkin, so as to prevent any moisture on the eyelids from getting into the eyes. But whether this is done or not, the antiseptic should be used in the manner just described. I strongly advocate the adoption of this simple plan in the case of every newly-born infant. I wish I could impress every Monthly Nurse in the country with its importance. Even if she did it a hundred times, and only in one instance saved a child from blindness, to have done this would be worth ten times—shall I not say a hundred times?—the trouble.

It has been a source of much pleasure to me to have had the opportunity of addressing you this evening. The subject of nursing, and especially obstetric nursing, has, as some of you know, had a special interest for me for many years. I rejoice to see evidences on all sides of a growing appreciation of Nurses' work, and a growing interest in their education, training, and general welfare. The public at large are beginning to recognise that whatever tends to advance the art of Nursing is a direct benefit to the general community. Prejudice and suspicion are gradually being dispelled, and Nurses are coming to feel that, instead of being merely tolerated, they are trusted and respected, and that they may count on being helped instead of hindered in the performance of their duties. Just as I believe there is, for men, no profession to be compared with that of medicine, so I believe that, for women, there is no calling to be compared with that of a Nurse. Only, in both cases, in order to ensure success, there must be aptitude and enthusiasm. A Nurse without natural aptitude for nursing will be wise to recognise the fact and turn her attention to something else. A Nurse without enthusiasm enough to lose sight of her little difficulties and hardships in the absorbing interest of her work, has chosen the wrong vocation, and, instead of airing her grievances in the correspondence columns of the daily papers, she had better relinquish nursing for some more congenial employment.

It is not, however, in my opinion, desirable that public attention should be drawn to the good deeds of individual Nurses. There always seems to me to be something absolutely incongruous in associating with the work of nursing any thought of publicity or praise. The best work done by Nurses is done in a spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice. It is that spirit which gives to nursing its dignity, and surrounds the Nurse herself with a halo of sanctity. Nothing should be permitted to blur that picture, or profane that high ideal. There

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