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### Editorial.

#### GOOD RESULTS BY SIMPLE MEANS.

LORD LISTER in opening the new operating theatres at St. Thomas's Hospital, made a remark which may well be considered by nurses, as well as medical students. "He had," he said, "some jealousy lest students, taught amid such luxuries as were afforded by the new theatres at St. Thomas's, might feel discouraged when performing operations in remote country districts, or in the homes of the poor, and give up the attempt to get aseptic results. He would suggest that those teaching in St. Thomas's should remind their pupils that good results might be obtained by simpler means. What he had said was perhaps superfluous, but, if so, he would beg his friends to forgive him, for he had not spoken in any spirit of criticism, but in one of warm admiration for the institution."

The warning is a timely one, and it is not only medical students but nurses also who are in danger of forgetting that the principles of asepticism can, and should be, carried out away from hospital wards. It must be remembered, that at the root of the aseptic

theory lies the principle of strict and absolute cleanliness. If this can be attained, costly appliances may well be dispensed with and, indeed, it should be our aim to dispense with them, for the greater simplicity practised the nearer we get to an ideal condition. Thus, of recent years the use of antiseptic lotions has been largely discontinued in favour of sterilization. Sterilized water, sterilized instruments, sterilized towels, so far as possible sterilized hands, are now regarded as essential to safety in surgical work. Given these, the use of antiseptic agents is unnecessary, and we all recognize that we have taken, with this step towards simplicity, a step also towards the ideal. It remains, therefore, to nurses to apply this principle practically in their daily work. If they are nursing in a cottage, they must see that the patient's room is thoroughly clean. Water, instruments, and towels can be effectively sterilized in a clean saucepan, hands can be made scrupulously clean. With attention to these details serious operations can be performed with safety in the homes of the poor. As it rests as a rule with the nurse in attendance to see that they are carried out, she should have both a power of initiative, and also a sense of scrupulous conscientiousness.

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