

Professional Review.

SURGICAL NURSING.

We have received from Mr. Edward Arnold, 41, Maddox Street, London, W., a copy of "Surgical Nursing, and the Principles of Surgery for Nurses," by Dr. Russell Howard, F.R.C.S., Lecturer on Surgical Nursing to the Probationers of the London Hospital. The price is 6s.

We are glad to note that the author observes in his preface that "modern nursing has passed beyond the stage of passive obedience. The active strides made by surgery in the past few years demand a great increase of knowledge on the part of the nurse, who must understand the principles upon which the surgeon is working in order to render him efficient aid.

"The increase in the amount of work in surgical wards demands greater specialisation, and the surgeon requires the nurse to be able to carry out the preparation of the patient for operation and the routine after treatment without special orders being given; and whilst the direction of the treatment remains in his hands, he leaves the details in the hands of the nurse."

The author further states:—"In surgical emergencies the nurse must also be prepared to formulate and carry out treatment until the arrival of the surgeon, and the efficiency of her treatment will depend upon her knowledge of surgical principles and the method of her application of them."

We have always contended that for nurses to be efficient co-operators with the medical profession they need something more than a mechanical knowledge of what to do in certain cases, they must know the principles upon which their work is based. A nurse who, either from ignorance or stupidity, does not

understand these principles, must always be a source of danger, and the most brilliant surgery and most carefully planned treatment may fail if the nurse is ignorant of the intentions of surgeon or physician.

The book is lucidly written and clearly arranged, and has many excellent illustrations. In the introductory chapter the author maintains that to understand the principles of surgery and surgical treatment, it is necessary to have some knowledge of anatomy, physiology, pathology, and bacteriology, he describes the methods of infection by micro-

organisms and the means which should be taken to counteract their pernicious action. These, whether in the preparation of the patient, of instruments, ligatures, sutures, sponges, dressings, hands, clothing, &c., may be summed up in the words "scrupulous cleanliness."

The second chapter treats of inflammation, it describes the chief means to which injuries are due, the difference between inflammation, which may be a natural process, and suppuration, which is always due to the presence of micro-organisms, the well known clinical signs of inflammation—pain, heat, swelling and redness, to which is added, when suppuration occurs, the further symptom of fluctuation. The treatment of inflammation, the removal of the cause, and rest to the inflamed part

is then described, rest in many instances involving the application of splints—of cold in the early stages, by means of ice bags, Leiter's Tubes, evaporating lead lotion, &c. Later on, especially when suppuration is inevitable, the application of heat may be desirable and the methods of its application by fomentations, poultices and baths are dealt with. We think that the suggestion of the author that a poultice should be made by the addition of four tablespoonfuls of linseed meal to a pint of water, would result in a very sloppy mixture.



Fig. 2. Patient, Feeding Himself After Gastrostomy.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)