

Professional Review.

PRACTICAL NURSING.

The Text Book for Nurses, entitled "Practical Nursing," by Miss Anna C. Maxwell, Superintendent of the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing, New York, and Miss Amy Elizabeth Pope, Instructor in Nursing in the same school, should be widely known and studied, for it is of exceptional excellence, and clearly describes to the nursing student the methods of performing those practical details of her work which she desires to know, but on which text books are very often silent.

The book is intended to be serviceable, not only to nurses, but to all who wish to acquaint themselves with the conditions and procedures necessary to the proper care of the sick and its aim is to give information in the simplest and most direct way. It is published in this country by Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 24, Bedford Street, Strand, W.C.

The first chapter deals with "The Qualifications of a Nurse," Physical, Mental, and Moral, and concludes by inculcating respect for the secrets of others. The advice given on this point is not unnecessary.

"When people are ill and in trouble they are very liable to tell things which in calmer moments they would never think of mentioning. Too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance of keeping such secrets inviolable. The nature of our patients' ailments should also be a matter of trust. In fact, the safest and most honourable course is never to discuss patients in any way. Many a nurse has had cause to bitterly regret a few careless words about the person under her care, or being drawn into a discussion of former patients and their ailments.

"If nurses would follow more closely the principles of the Florence Nightingale Pledge, which is given below, and which is recommended to their attention, they would be less likely to commit many of the indiscretions for which they are often justly blamed.

THE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE PLEDGE.

"I solemnly pledge myself before God, and in the presence of this assembly, to pass my life in purity, and to practise my profession faithfully. I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, and will not take, or knowingly administer any harmful drug. I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping, and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practise of my calling. With loyalty will I endeavour to aid the physician in his work, and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care."

BAACTERIOLOGY.

There was a time, not long ago, when bacteriology was considered the exclusive province of the medical practitioner. Later some progressive members of hospital staffs gave to ward sisters information on the subject, rightly judging

that the quality of their work in relation to recent knowledge would be improved if it were done intelligently instead of in ignorance of the principles which governed it; but such knowledge was not considered meet for the rank and file.

Miss Maxwell and Miss Pope now rightly claim that as all measures for the prevention of disease are based on bacteriology, the study of this subject should be taken up early by persons who are being prepared for the care of the sick. They point out that there is, indeed, no other way by which such a realisation of the existence of microscopical organisms, as will insure scrupulous obedience to the laws of asepsis and prophylaxis can be obtained, and they place the chapter on bacteriology in the forefront of their book. The information therein contained, including important facts in the history of bacteriology, and the best method of testing sponges, dressings, etc., with a view to discovering germs—a very necessary and practical bit of knowledge for a nurse—should be carefully studied. The paragraphs on the nature and classification of bacteria treat this subject with great clearness, and those on the manner of growth of bacteria and the methods of destroying germs by heat, and by disinfectants or germicides, are most valuable.

Thus we read:—"The use of heat to destroy germs is called sterilisation; the use of chemicals is called disinfection.

"There are four methods of sterilisation by heat. (1) By boiling. (2) By the use of live steam. (3) By the use of live steam under pressure. (4) By hot air, or dry sterilisation."

The technique of these methods is then given in detail.

VENTILATION.

An important part of the work of trained nurse is to ensure thorough ventilation of wards and sick rooms:—"A plentiful supply of fresh air is an important factor in the treatment of disease. . . . The gradual realisation of the curative properties of fresh air and sunlight is leading, year by year, to the opening of new sanatoria, especially equipped for open air treatment, and to the addition to hospitals of sun-rooms and rooms connecting with wide verandahs so arranged that the beds can be wheeled through the window." The authors also point out that "To obtain perfect ventilation it is not only necessary that the heating be well regulated, and the supply of air constantly changed, but that the air be kept, so far as is possible, free from contamination. To this end, every effort must be made to keep the patients and whatever relates to them, perfectly clean.

"The exudations of the skin are exceedingly deleterious. The patients must be bathed frequently, therefore, and the bed clothes must be changed often enough to keep them odourless and clean. Trash and garbage cans, and the receptacles for soiled dressings are often sources of contamination if they are not kept covered, and if they are not cleansed and scalded daily. Garbage cans should be emptied at least three times a day."

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