

to cause that nerve and bodily exhaustion which is the great precursor of ill-health. It is, moreover, a practical fact well known to all who have had charge of great hospitals, but to which, unfortunately, little attention has been given, that probationers during their term of training are most prone to suffer from decay of the teeth. The exact cause of this has, we believe, never been explained authoritatively; if, indeed, the fact is known to the surgeon-dentists of our hospitals. We are ourselves inclined to attribute it, in a considerable measure, to the insanitary surroundings of a nurse's work. In one great institution, in which the drainage was most defective, not only the nurses, but even the resident medical officers suffered, during their term of residence, from rapid decay of the teeth, as well as from such other complaints as whitlows and carbuncles, which proved the insanitary conditions under which their work was carried on; and it is noteworthy that as soon as they left the hospital most of them ceased to suffer from decay of the teeth.

From whatever cause it may arise we believe that general experience proves the fact that the majority of probationers suffer greatly from decay of the teeth; and to this we cannot but ascribe much of the ill-health, often leading to total breakdown, from which so many nurses suffer during their period of training. The carious teeth not only cause pain and sleeplessness and so depreciate the bodily strength, but they also prevent the due mastication of the food and so set up intractable forms of indigestion, by which the nutrition of the body is still further injured, and the bodily health still further suffers.

The practical remedy which we would suggest is that hospital matrons should consider this matter, and that hospital committees should arrange with the surgeon-dentists of their institutions to give the necessary care and attention to the members of the nursing staff, as well as to the hospital out-patients. If each nurse on the staff had her teeth inspected every six months and any commencing decay immediately dealt with, it would probably be the means of saving her the loss of many teeth and much subsequent ill-health. And it would certainly be more economical for hospitals to prevent such illness on the part of its nurses rather than to bear the expense of tending them in sickness.

Lectures on Elementary Physiology, in relation to Medical Nursing.

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LECTURE V.—THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.

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THE fact, then, should be remembered that a patient suffering from fever is not necessarily worse if he becomes delirious; and that the return of the delirium at night is probably due to the then increased temperature of the body. It is, moreover, probable that the brain disturbance, which causes the confusion of thought and excitement characteristic of delirium, may be due to the irritation only of that part of the brain which has not yet been distinctly defined, but to which theoretically the name of "heat centre" has been given. There seems good reason to believe that the temperature of the body, like all the other functions, is under the control of the central nervous system; and that there is a part of the brain which governs the degree of bodily heat just as other spots are known to be the "centres" which regulate the functions of speech, of sight, of taste, and of smell. Were it otherwise, indeed, it is almost certain that the temperature of the body, in health, would not remain always at a definite level, but would vary very considerably, according to the amount of exercise, or even of food, which might be taken. It is probable that, before long, the precise locality of this "heat centre" may be defined, and then it will possibly be discovered that it is close to the part of the brain which governs speech; and so by the disturbance in its neighbourhood there is excited the corresponding disturbance in the speech which characterises the delirious patient. This, however, is more of a theoretical question than is usually considered in these lectures; and it is only referred to here, in order to emphasise the inter-dependence of one part of the brain upon another, and to afford a rational explanation of a symptom which is always serious, but which is more alarming to the lay mind than to the professional.

In some cases of delirium, where cold cannot be applied to the head, the same calmative result can be obtained by different means. The attack as we have seen is almost invariably due to congestion of the brain;

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