

Professional Review.

"HANDBOOK OF OBSTETRIC NURSING."

WE have received a copy of the third edition of the "Handbook of Obstetric Nursing," by Francis W. N. Haultain, M.D., F.R.C.P.; and James Haig Ferguson, M.D., F.R.C.P.; published by Messrs. Young J. Pentland, Edinburgh and London, price 5/-. The book contains 37 excellent illustrations, as well as a coloured frontispiece. It gives much information necessary for monthly nurses and midwives in a clear, concise, and simple form, and should be of great use to candidates preparing for the London Obstetrical Society's Examination. It is written with a view to the needs of nurses, and the language used is as free as possible from technicalities. The chapter upon antiseptics is plain and practical.

We have doubts as to the wisdom of the plan, stated to be pursued at the Royal Maternity, Edinburgh, of soaking the towels worn by a lying-in woman in 1 in 20 carbolic, or 1 in 2,000 corrosive-sublimate, immediately before application to the patient's genitals; the towels being applied, wet or dry, according to instructions. Sterilization would be an effective method of treating these towels, and surely safer than the former plan. The use of carbolic oil for lubricating the finger or catheters is also somewhat antiquated, and vaseline has been proved to provide a suitable nidus for germs, so that carbolized or mercurialized glycerine seems to be a more desirable lubricant.

The notes on the signs, symptoms, and duration of pregnancy are excellent, as are also those describing the phenomena of labour. The remarks upon the mechanism of labour, while giving a clear view of this proceeding as a whole, does not we think go sufficiently into detail to enable a student to gain the knowledge she will require, in order to pass the L.O.S. examination; and on this subject she will be wise to consult a more elaborate text book. The directions as to the management of the patient during the puerperal period are admirable, but to one remark we take exception. Absolute rest in bed for at least nine days is naturally enjoined, but the authors go on to say "From this cause, the bed cannot properly be 'made,' but one side can be shaken up while the patient lies on the other, clean bedclothes being substituted for soiled one's with as little disturbance to the patient as possible." It surely is not contemplated, in these days, that a lying-in woman shall be nursed on anything but a mattress, and this being so it will require no "shaking up," but the bed can be made as thoroughly as can that of a surgical patient who is perhaps kept in bed for months.

It would, however, be invidious to mention the few small blemishes which occur in the book, and not to note our cordial appreciation of its excellences; chief among these being the lucid and practical way in which throughout it deals with the subject in hand. We most heartily commend it to nurses who are training in maternity work—believing that in it they will find the information they need, put in a much clearer way than is often the case in text books of this nature—while the illustrations will be of very material use to them. The Appendix contains the Memorandum by the British Medical Association of the regulations proposed for adoption by the Obstetric Nurses' Board. We hope that this Board will have ample representation upon it of the nurses themselves.

Letter from Holland.

A DUTCH proverb says: "To speak is silver, but to keep silence is gold." It is not for that reason, however, that I have kept silent for so long a time. A wise philosopher—I don't remember his name, but to judge from the meaning of his saying he must have been a *very* wise man—has spoken out, as his firm conviction, that it is better not to speak at all than to tell things which are not worth mentioning. I have followed the advice of that unknown philosopher, and therefore neglected my duty as correspondent from Holland for this journal. After this introduction my kind readers will perhaps now expect a letter interesting in the highest degree. If this be the case, let me prepare you beforehand for a disappointment, then the relations are cleared on both parts, on yours and mine.

This time I come to you with a topic that has always rejoiced in your honoured sympathy. When telling of the Dutch Nursing Association, I am sure of an attentively listening ear on the side of our kind English sisters, who always show a warm interest in all that happens in the nursing world of our country. So let me tell you first, that from several directions complaints have arisen (not so much on the part of the nurses themselves as from the side of the public) concerning the number of the working hours for the nursing staffs in the different hospitals—complaints sometimes just, sometimes exaggerated, as is commonly the case in such matters. True to its aim: the furthering of the cause of sick nursing and the care of the interests of all who have devoted their lives to this noble work, the "Bond" (Dutch Nursing Association) has made an *enquête*, and sent a list of questions to the Boards of Management of the various hospitals, Houses of Deaconesses, and kindred institutions, with a circular enclosed, requesting the most complete answers. The questions asked at the Board referred to:

- The age at which probationers are admitted;
- The number of the patients, that of the wards, how many patients were nursed in every ward;
- How many head-nurses were working in every hospital; how many patients were allotted to the care of each of them; the daily beginning and ending of their being on duty; if they were sometimes called at night to their respective wards, being deprived in this way of the rest and sleep so much needed by them; their time of holiday, the hours granted for the different meals, etc.;
- The number of the nurses and probationers; that of the patients trusted to their care; their working and leisure time; the hours allowed for their meals, etc.; if there were special servants for the performance of the domestic duties in the wards, the tea kitchens, etc.;
- The night service.
- The salary of head-nurses and other nurses;
- The course of training;
- The pensioning of the nurses;
- Any possible difference between the working hours and time of holiday of male and female nurses;

The leading motive of the Board of the "Bond" when composing this list of questions was the ardent desire to deal with the just complaints, thinking it most rightly an unworthy shame to abuse the devotion and self-denial of so many brave and noble nurses, who think lightly of all fatigue, physical as well as

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