

## Professional Review.

## MEDICAL AND SURGICAL NURSING.

We have received from the publishers, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 24, Bedford Street, London, W.C., a copy of "Medical and Surgical Nursing" (price 6s.), edited by H. J. O'Brien, M.D., Professor of Clinical Surgery Hamline University, Medical Director and Lecturer St. Joseph's Hospital Training School for Nurses, St. Paul, U.S.A. The aim of the book is to make good nurses better, and indifferent nurses good; the editor believes that the wholly bad nurse, like water, will eventually seek her own level, and leave the field of nursing, as it should be left, to the educated, competent, and conscientious woman. The feature of the book is that all the articles, with the exception of that on *Cooking for the Sick* which is written by Mrs. Mary B. James, Instructor in Domestic Economy at the High School, Janesville, and Instructor in *Cooking for the Sick*, St. Joseph's Hospital Training School for Nurses, St. Paul, are written by medical men engaged in teaching either medical students, or nurses, or both. The desire of the editor has been to make the work broad, "distinctly not a one-man book," but to treat of anatomy, physiology, medicine, surgery, &c., for the nurse from the physician's and surgeon's standpoint. He rightly holds that "collateral and constant reading and study are as necessary to the nurse as to the physician; to be competent the nurse must ever be a student," and he has compressed much valuable information within the limits of this volume.

It would appear from the chapter on general nursing, by Dr. Everton J. Abbott, A.B., that not only in this country are criticisms expressed as to the private nurse. We read:—"It sometimes occurs to the physician when he recommends the employment of a professional nurse, that objection is made by the patient or family, not on account of expense, but on account of dislike to the presence of the nurse in the family, which dislike is the result of previous experience the family or their friends have had with nurses. Some nurses, without the least intention of doing so, make themselves disagreeable and obnoxious to a family by their tyrannical and dictatorial manner, as a result of a habit of interfering with the domestics and even the culinary arrangements of the family. Some nurses conduct themselves in such a manner that it is almost impossible to retain in the family the servants who are obliged to come under their directions. Other nurses are so kind, obliging, and skilful in their manner, and so diplomatic in smoothing over troubles and annoyances that are apt to arise in a family, that their presence brings pleasure and enjoyment into the household, and their departure is regretted as is that of a dear friend. It is not always the best-trained or most skilful nurse who is the most successful, but rather the one who with a fair amount of skill combines a certain amount of tact, judgment, and common sense. Very interesting is the article by Dr. John L. Rothrock on "General Considerations Concerning Bacteria," in which a brief historical sketch is first given, then a description of bacteria and their method of multiplication, the physical and chemical agencies and vital forces which are destructive to bacterial life, and the means of

bacterial infection. In comparatively few diseases, we are told, is infection transmitted directly from one person to another. "Thus bacteria may escape from the body of a person suffering from the disease, as, for example, the sputum of a patient suffering from tuberculosis of the lungs, which, if allowed to dry, is taken up by the air as dust, and is freely disseminated. Such a patient may in this manner become a menace to the household, or to an entire community. The same may be said of typhoid fever, in case of failure to disinfect the stools, which invariably contain the infectious principle. In this instance, however, the bacteria find their way to the soil and ultimately to drinking water, through which they gain entrance to the body." Pneumonia, influenza, tuberculosis, whooping-cough, diphtheria, Asiatic cholera, yellow fever, typhoid fever, and leprosy are all due to recognised bacteria, and the method of infection is described in each instance. Surgical infections are also dealt with. A rule which nurses will do well to remember is that "it is much easier to avoid contamination of the hands than to free them from contamination afterwards. Indeed, virulent bacteria have been known to persist on the hands for three or four days after infection, notwithstanding the most painstaking and repeated efforts at disinfection."

It is interesting to learn that, "as early as 1668, Francesco Redi had observed that maggots only appeared in meat when exposed so that flies had access to it. For example, if he placed it in a covered jar so that flies could not light upon it, they buzzed about the jar, but no maggots developed on it. He reasoned that decomposition which took place in meat when exposed to the air was likewise due to the presence of some low form of animal life. It was not, however, until 1675 that these suspected micro-organisms were actually demonstrated."

An article on "Asepsis and Antisepsis," by Dr. Eduard Boeckmann, detailing the practical application of the principles of asepsis and antisepsis to surgery, should be carefully studied by nurses. The author concludes: "A clean, quiet, intelligent, and skilful nurse is a gem in the operating rooms, a comfort to the surgeon, and a blessing to suffering humanity."

An interesting article is that on "Anæsthesia," by Dr. Charles J. Meade, which deals with the history of the discovery of anæsthetics, the preparation of the patient for anæsthesia, and anæsthesia by means of chloroform, ether, and local anæsthetics.

Dr. Arnold Schwyzer contributes an article on Shock, which is considered as a nervous exhaustion, with its consequences upon the body through the nerve channels. It may be caused by sudden and profound mental impressions, such as fright, severe pain and anger, or its symptoms may develop after an accident or operation.

Dr. Arthur J. Gillette deals with deformities, congenital and acquired. Congenital deformities are club-foot, club-hand, spina-bifida, dislocation of joints, &c., while acquired ones are those which occur from disease or injury after birth.

Acute infectious and contagious diseases are described by Dr. John B. Brimhall.

Dr. Henry J. O'Brien is responsible for the article on Fractures, Dislocations, and Wounds. Writing of fractures the author says:—"The aid required of a nurse in case of a broken bone depends largely upon the com-

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