

Professional Review.

GYNÆCOLOGICAL NURSING.

"Any trained nurse should be able to nurse a gynæcological case efficiently if called upon to do so." This is the general opinion of those who have never had any special training in this branch. "The average certificated nurse is no use to me," says the Matron of a hospital for women; "she knows nothing about gynæcological work, and frequently has to be taught to pass the female catheter."

Perhaps the best answer which can be given to those nurses who assume that they are instinctively able to assume the responsibility for the nursing care of this class of patient is the excellent manual on "Gynæcological Nursing" by Miss Netta Stewart, Sister in the Extra-mural Gynæcological Wards of the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, price 2s. 6d., and published by Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, and Simpkin, Marshall and Co., Ltd., London. The book, which is dedicated to Miss Spencer, the Superintendent of Nurses at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, has a preface by Sir Halliday Croom. We agree with him that it fills "an obvious want, and brings credit to the nursing school to which the authoress belongs."

No one can read the book without realising that the deft manipulations and skilled touch which are needed in the care of gynæcological cases can only be acquired by considerable practice, under the supervision of expert teachers, and that no one who has not had this experience, and is thus practised in the requisite methods of work, should undertake to nurse gynæcological cases.

The value of the book is increased by the excellent illustrations, which add considerably to the clearness of the text. We hope it will be added to every nurse's library, and the price brings it within the reach of most nurses to possess.

Amongst the points dealt with are:—

The examination of patients; the various methods employed being:—

Simple abdominal examination.

Examination of the external genitals by sight (inspection).

Simple vaginal examination (per vaginam).

Simple rectal examination (per rectum).

Simple bimanual examination (abdomino-vaginal).

Rectal bimanual examination (abdomino-rectal).

Recto-vaginal bimanual examination (abdomino-recto-vaginal).

The preparation of the patient depending on the form of examination to be made is clearly described, as are also the positions which a patient is asked to assume. The preparation of instruments and the method of handing them to the gynæcologist are also dealt with, and obviously from the point of view of one who is well acquainted with practical details, and who, therefore, mentions just those points which it is important a nurse should know. Thus:—

"In handing the volsellum and sound to the gynæcologist, the nurse should hold these instruments just above the handle. The speculum should be warm, and the convex surface of the blade lubricated with carbolic vaseline. The concave surface, which reflects the light along the vagina, should on no account be lubricated."

In connection with the administration of the

vaginal douche, Miss Stewart describes a bidet which is in use in the gynæcological wards of the Royal Infirmary, and "has been found invaluable." Accessories to this appliance are an inflated rubber cushion, a douche-can with a tap and large enough to hold at least two quarts of water, two and a-half yards of rubber tubing with a glass vaginal nozzle attached, a bath thermometer, a pail, plenty of hot water, with any lotion the doctor has ordered, and a little carbolic vaseline. In the bidet the distinctive features are that the outlet is placed at the side instead of at the lower end; there is a false bottom, consisting of two inclined planes which meet in a gutter running from side to side across the centre of the floor of the bidet; the gutter is continued through the side of the bidet into a tube projecting about one inch from the side of the apparatus.

To this short tube is attached a brass right-angled tube, which carries off the water or lotion into the pail placed beneath it. It will be readily understood that by this device the bidet cannot overflow, as the water is carried away as quickly as it enters by the outlet tube. A gallon of water will keep an ordinary douche running for about ten minutes."

The preparation of the various vaginal tampons and plugs is described, the use and application of the cantharides blister, the use of the catheter, the method of washing out the bladder, the operation of curettage—"probably the commonest operation in gynæcology, but, though simple in its nature and of everyday occurrence, it entails no small responsibility on the part of the nurse. The preparation of the "dressed" sound frequently used in connection with this operation is clearly described.

The nurse's duties before and after the operation of perineal repair occupy another chapter, and others are devoted to the operation of vesico-vaginal fistula repair, vaginal hysterectomy, the examination of the female bladder, of the rectum, the administration of the intra-uterine douche, the duties of the nurse when attending to a case of gonorrhœa, the operation of abdominal section, including the preparation of the operating-room, the preparation of the patient for the operation, and on the operating-table, the precautions to be taken by the nurse herself, her duties during the operation, the preparation of the bed of the patient, the nurse's duties immediately after the operation, the after-treatment of the patient with reference to the duties entrusted to the nurse, the complications, septic peritonitis, and hæmorrhage. A chapter is devoted to the preparation of sponges and swabs, and the last to the preparation of instruments for operation. The care of instruments after operation is also described: "they should be well washed with water, soap, and soda, in order to remove all blood-stains, &c., and then scoured with some silver paste or powder to restore their brightness. They should then be carefully inspected, each instrument being again washed with soda and water and scrubbed with a clean brush. Each pair of scissors, forceps, &c., should be disjoined when possible, and the catches, joints, and teeth thoroughly scrubbed, and then carefully dried."

We have thus indicated very briefly the scope of the book. For the many valuable practical details contained in it we must refer our readers to the work itself. Time devoted to its study will be time well spent.

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