

relied upon. The removing of these is a rather difficult operation and requires great care and considerable practice.

In some cases—for example, with “bacillus pyocyaneus”—if the agar is strong and dry, the removal can seldom be effected by the platinum needle without injuring the specimen, except with practised hands. In such cases moist agar will give better and more manageable results. The specimens may then be stained by many of the well-known formulæ, such as Fleming’s Solution, Dallinger’s Carmine, Gibbe’s stain, Roux’s Blue, and the like.

On the Importance of “Little Things.”

A FEW WORDS TO THE PROBATIONERS AT THE ROYAL NATIONAL SANATORIUM, BOURNEMOUTH.

I think it is well every now and again to pause in the regular routine of our weekly classes on physiology and other kindred subjects and to consider during our lesson hour some of the everyday details of our life and conduct as part of a community instituted for a special purpose and supported by public money; so to-night we will leave “Huxley” alone and just have a quiet chat on “The Importance of Little Things.”

Really, our lives are so made up of little things that it is difficult to know quite where to begin; but, by way of a start, we will briefly consider such details as the waste of “trifles hardly worth bothering about” from many a probationer’s point of view, the carelessness so often shown by lack of accuracy in word and deed, and the necessity for habits of punctuality in details of ward work.

WASTE OF LITTLE THINGS.

In the first place you must realise that as probationers in an institution of this description you are officials entrusted with the care of that which has been provided by the charitable public for the relief of the sick poor, and that it is, therefore, just as dishonest of you to waste hospital stores as would be the embezzlement of the funds by a clerk in the office.

As probationers you have not much to do with such stores as dressings, but remember that you have no right to waste the tiniest scrap. I have seen nurses take a piece of lint to polish brasses, and throw milk down the kitchen sink without ever considering that they had no right to make away with hospital property in this manner.

Again, do you ever think that the electric

lights which you leave burning, even if only for a minute or two, and the water taps that you don’t bother to quite turn off all represent the consumption by the institution of light and water, which has to be paid for, and which has been of no earthly use or service to anyone. You would be astonished if you could see the amount of water that can escape from even one dripping tap in an hour, and which is all recorded by the water meter.

Another little “trifle” in this connection, which perhaps may not strike you, is the waste of materials provided for cleaning purposes, the soap left melting in the water, the absurd quantity of soda thrown into the pail, the metal polish tin tossed aside but not completely empty.

Breakages, too, ought to be far less than are generally the case. The slapdash, careless probationer who is constantly dropping thermometers and breaking crockery will never make a smart and good nurse. She can never be anything but a costly and unsatisfactory unit in any institution.

In the Laundry Department we find another detail worthy of notice; remember that even with every care the institution must have a heavy enough washing bill, and although the management of this does not depend so much upon you; yet the mismanagement may be largely due to your carelessness.

And now a few words as to waste in provisions. Of that on your own table it ought not to be necessary for me to speak, but in this institution at all events your duties are largely concerned with the dieting of the patients and you should make a point of seeing that the food given is not wasted by them.

The Sister who serves the meals always makes allowance for capricious appetites, and you must take care that such details as neatly arranged trays and covers for the plates are not wanting. No doubt when you take, say the mid-morning milk, to the patients in the shelters it is easier and quicker to fly about with the jug and to fill each one’s mug alike, and then to dash round and collect them whether empty or not, than to give each person a suitable quantity and if it be not all consumed to find out the reason and to persuade the patient to finish it.

H. T.

(To be continued.)

At an Investiture held by the King at Buckingham Palace on Monday last, Mrs. Charles Clay was introduced into His Majesty’s presence and received the Decoration of the Royal Red Cross.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)