

Professional Review.

THE SCIENCE AND ART OF NURSING.

(Concluded from page 135.)

DISTRICT NURSING.

Miss Amy Hughes, General Superintendent of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, writes on the subject of District Nursing. She describes the varied conditions of the work, the patients being found "in single rooms, in crowded tenements, in slum dwellings, in artisan buildings, and in comfortably furnished houses. They live in manufacturing centres, country towns, picturesque villages, isolated farmhouses, and cottages in glens, on mountains, and on lonely islands. In each locality the need for skilled and special knowledge how best to carry out the doctor's orders, frequently under unfavourable circumstances, is the same."

The district nursing cases include acute, in connection with which no inconsiderable part of the nurse's work is that she instructs the friends in the faithful carrying out of instructions during her necessary absences from the patient, chronic, to many of whom the nurse's visit is the one bright spot in the day, then infants and young children also claim her attention. "The national conscience is at last alive to the shameful waste of infantile life, and to what is even worse, the crippling of young lives from the beginning by neglect of the laws of health. District nurses have wider opportunities than any other class of workers, of educating mothers in the proper rearing of children. They can protest against injurious feeding and ignorant management of infants and young children before irrevocable mischief has been wrought. It is easy to do this on the daily rounds, while visiting general patients, and the mothers are usually more ready to listen to what the nurse in simple language says on such occasions than to accept instructions given in a more formal manner.

"The opportunities for this education afforded by district midwifery cannot be over-estimated. The midwife can help the mother both before and after the birth of her child to the infinite advantage of both."

School nursing, and the nursing of tuberculosis, also often fall to the share of the district nurse. In connection with the latter we read that "By degrees the rudiments of hygiene are penetrating into the homes of the people, and within recent years it has been possible to have open windows during the night, and thorough ventilation during the day, to ensure the boiling of water and milk, and the burning of everything that has touched an infectious case."

Miss Hughes says that "a complete nursing education with special district training in addition, is needed to fit nurses for the responsibilities that must devolve upon them at one time or another. The standard has been gradually raised by district associations, not only as regards the length of time given, but also the position of the institution in which it was obtained. It is now recognised that full general training is requisite to ensure both knowledge and discipline. The idea that inferior

qualifications will suffice for nurses who attend the poor than for those who attend the rich still lingers, but it is gradually dying out as the extension of the work proves conclusively that the full term of three or four years' training in an approved nursing school is essential."

THE NURSING OF LIGHT AND X. RAYS, HEAT, AND ELECTRICITY CASES.

Miss Katharine Blandford, Sister in Charge of the Light Department at the London Hospital, contributes a chapter on the above subject. She explains that it is necessary to know something of the therapeutic properties of light and the nature of the disease of lupus before touching upon its treatment by Finsen light. The rays given off by the sun are composed of various colours, as is seen by passing light through a prism, when they are seen in the following order:—Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, and ultra violet. At the blue end of this row, which is known as the spectrum, the rays are irritating, and possess chemical qualities which render them germicidal, while the red rays convey heat. It is the chemical or actinic rays which are used in the Finsen treatment of lupus. Some action of these rays is seen in what we call "sunburn."

This variety of inflammation of the skin is followed by pigmentation, or "bronzing." It is not due to the heat rays of the sun, for a severe form is caused by light reflected from a glacier, and under these circumstances the heat rays are absorbed by the ice. The writer describes the method by which these rays are applied in cases of lupus, which is a tubercular disease of the skin, due to the same bacillus which causes consumption of the lungs.

When treating a case at the lamp it is, we are told, essential that the nurse should wear dark glasses for two reasons:—

1. The light is so intense that it would be impossible to see if the right part were being kept under treatment, and also if it were perfectly anæmic
2. The nurse would get conjunctivitis.

The book is published by Messrs. Cassell and Co., La Belle Sauvage, E.C.

M. B.

LEGAL MATTERS.

At the Essex Assizes on February 8th, Mrs. Annie E. Whitmore, formerly Charge Nurse at Rochford Workhouse Infirmary, and at present nurse at Constance Road Workhouse, Dulwich, brought an action against the Chairman of the Board of Guardians and three of the members of the first-mentioned institution, for libel, slander, and conspiracy. The ground of the action was that when the nurse left the Workhouse the Guardians refused to give her a testimonial, subsequently reporting to the Local Government Board that they considered charges against her of a most objectionable character had been proved. An inquiry was subsequently held by a Local Government Board Inspector, who reported that the charges against Nurse Whitmore were not substantiated. For the Guardians, Mr. Hohler, K.C., undertook to propose at their next meeting that a testimonial be given to Mrs. Whitmore.

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