

care, rather than under the strict prison discipline. Were carefully-selected trained nurses, who have passed through a special training to fit them for this important work, appointed to positions of responsibility in our prisons and kindred institutions, they would be able to render most important public service, and to bring some hope into the lives of a most hopeless section of the community.

## Medical Matters.

### ACROMEGALY.

Professor Arthur Keith lectured last week at the Royal College of Surgeons on a disease known as acromegaly, when he said that those who are the subjects of this disease find that their hands and feet increase slowly in size. The face also grows, especially the lower parts, and the ridges over the eyes become more prominent. The necessity for larger sizes in boots, gloves, hats and collars may draw the patient's attention to these changes, but the enlargements usually occur so gradually that the subject is unconscious of them. Attention was first drawn to the disease in 1886 by Dr. Pierre Marie, a well known French physician, and there are probably 50 subjects or more of this disease in London at the present time. The prototype of Punch is, said the Professor, supposed by some to have been subject to this disease; the diagnosis, however, is evidently wrong, for, although the ample nose, the massive lower jaw, projecting chin, and dorsal hump bear some resemblance to symptoms of the real disease, yet the lively humour, small hands, thin lips, and well-fitting teeth are against the theory. Enlargement of the pituitary body, a small gland at the base of the brain, supposed by the ancients to be the seat of the soul, and by many modern persons as a functionless structure, is characteristic of acromegaly. Recently, its form, use, and diseases have been the subjects of many inquiries, and it is becoming evident that its secretion is closely concerned in regulating and co-ordinating the growth of various parts of the body. It is believed that further study of the effects produced by over-growths of this gland will provide a key to many of the factors which determine the physical conformation of the body, and lead to the establishment of physical anthropology on a scientific basis.

We are learning to discredit the assumption that any organ of the body is functionless. Usually our own knowledge is at fault.

## Surgical Nursing Outside of Hospitals.

By Mr. JOHN D. DOWDEN, F.R.C.S.E.

Mr. John D. Dowden, F.R.C.S.E., lectured to trained nurses in the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, on Wednesday, November 9th, taking for his subject "Surgical Nursing Outside of Hospitals."

In opening his lecture, Mr. Dowden said he had drawn up a scheme to assist nurses at private operations. (1) Before and (2) after operation.

He instanced preparation for a major operation—carcinoma of mammae.

### PRELIMINARY PREPARATIONS.

**In Relation to the Patient.**—*General.*—Temperature to be taken four hourly and charted. The importance of this is that the surgeon can then compare the temperature before and after the operation.

*Alimentary System.*—Teeth to be thoroughly cleansed. The nurse to inquire of surgeon what diet and laxative he desires given; also as to the administration of an enema, etc.

*Circulatory System.*—Pulse to be taken every four hours.

*Genito-urinary System.*—Urine to be measured, the amount passed in 24 hours to be recorded, a sample to be put in an absolutely clean bottle, labelled with name and address of patient, then sent to surgeon.

*Integumentary System.*—Patient to have a bath and warm clothing, clean.

*Nervous System.*—If the patient is very nervous, the surgeon will probably order bromide or morphia; if the latter, Mr. Dowden remarked, the patient must not know, as frequently morphia given with the knowledge of patients has caused them to contract the morphia habit subsequently.

*Respiratory System.*—Respirations to be taken and recorded every four hours; room to be well ventilated.

**Local Preparation.**—Area to be cleansed, the whole of chest down to umbilicus, under both arms, the neck, shoulders, and down to lower part of back; *method*, washing with Lysol, spirits of soap; use a liberal supply of swabs of gauze, throwing the soiled ones away; shave; when the prescribed area is thoroughly cleansed, cover with dry sterile towels kept in place with domette bandages.

**The Operation Room.**—When the surgeon has selected the operation room, remove the carpet and all furniture and pictures possible. If the room is dark, hang up white sheets, a clothes-horse can be covered with white sheets, and will answer two purposes—to help to give light.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)