

## PROFESSIONAL REVIEW.

## NOTES FOR MALE NURSES.

A useful little book, recently published by Messrs. George Pulman & Sons, Ltd., Thayer Street, Manchester Square, London, W., price 1s., is "Notes for Male Nurses." The instructions it contains on the use of the catheter were originally written by a surgeon for the use of the members of the Male Nurses' (Temperance) Co-operation, Ltd., 10, Thayer Street, Manchester Square, W., and at the request of many male nurses outside the association, these have now been published in book form, in the hope that they will be helpful to all employed in this very special class of work.

In the "Foreword" we are told that it is surprising more men do not embrace the opportunities offered for improving their position by gaining experience of nursing in large asylums. Skilled and intelligent male nurses, connected with a high-class private nursing Co-operation, where constant work is guaranteed, may always rely on an average income, including emoluments, of £150 per annum.

It is stated that "many nurses commence private nursing with little or no knowledge of catheter work, while many of those who can pass catheters do so with such utter disregard of all the rules of surgical cleanliness, that, in their hands, a catheter becomes a most deadly weapon."

We read that the care of catheter cases "involves a greater responsibility than almost any others which a nurse is called upon to undertake." Catheters "require extremely methodical and cleanly handling, and also a certain degree of skill; while the ill effects which a patient may suffer from the unskilled use of dirty catheters are so serious, that it is absolutely imperative that the nurse should know and thoroughly understand every step of the process.

"In other words, there is a certain routine to be followed in the treatment of urinary disorders with catheters and similar instruments. To minimize the unavoidable danger to the patient from the introduction of instruments, this routine must be carried out intelligently and thoroughly. This can only be expected if the nurse possesses some elementary anatomical knowledge of the parts concerned; if he understands the object of the various measures adopted to avoid injury to the patient, and if he has a wholesome appreciation of the serious results which are sure to follow any lapse from care or cleanliness on his part."

The anatomy of the bladder and urethra are then described, and it is explained how in certain maladies either the bladder or the urethra fails to carry out its functions in the normal manner. This failure may manifest itself either in (1) retention of urine; or (2) inability to hold urine.

The causes of these conditions are then detailed.

*Retention of urine* may be due to "(a) loss of control over the muscle of the bladder (this is most commonly found in nervous diseases, such

as locomotor ataxy and general paralysis); (b) mechanical obstruction to the outflow of urine (this is generally due to stricture, or inflammation of the urethra, or to enlargement of the prostate.)"

*Inability to hold urine* is also of two kinds. "(a) Overflow incontinence—in which the paralysed bladder is unable to empty itself, but overflows when full. This occurs in many nervous diseases; in fact, in the same diseases which may also give rise to retention. (b) True incontinence (in which the urine trickles away from the bladder as fast as it enters). This is rare.

"The cases which the nurse is most likely to have to deal with are nervous cases, associated with loss of control over the bladder, and enlargement of the prostate.

"It is in the first instance that clean and efficient handling is so important, because patients suffering with nervous diseases are very prone to get inflammation of the bladder."

The various forms of catheter (rigid and flexible), are then described, and the two main dangers to be guarded against in the use of these instruments, which are:—

"(1) The danger of infecting the bladder with organisms introduced on the instruments; (2) The risk of actual mechanical injury to the parts."

The necessity of surgical cleanliness is insisted upon, because the mucous membrane of the urethra and bladder, if micro-organisms are once introduced, form a most fertile soil in which they flourish and multiply, setting up an inflammation which may spread up the ureters to the kidneys, which are so altered thereby that they become incapable of acting, and the already debilitated patient dies, killed by the retention in his blood of the poisonous products formed in his body, and normally excreted by the kidneys.

"This is the train of events immediately responsible for the death of a large number of patients suffering from nervous diseases, involving loss of control over the bladder."

"The use of unclean methods of catheterisation is directly responsible for this."

Minute directions are then given as to the means of avoiding the infection of the bladder, and the best methods of sterilising catheters. The lubricant recommended is sterile oil or vaseline. Besides the preparation of the catheter and lubricant, that of the patient and the hands of the nurse is discussed. Only when these are satisfactorily disposed of, is the routine to be observed in the introduction of the instrument given.

The book describes very clearly and concisely the method to be employed, and is to be commended to nurses who desire to add to their knowledge of this subject. M. B.

The whole of the Ottoman Empire is in the grip of cholera. From Bagdad to Kossovo and from Scutari to Erzeroum scarcely a town or village has escaped paying toll to the dreadful scourge. The deaths can be numbered by thousands.

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