

for this reform, and the Officers have addressed Leagues of Nurses and other meetings on this subject during the year.

#### THE PROFESSIONAL PRESS.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING still continues to be the only weekly journal in this country edited by a trained nurse, but the number of professionally edited League Journals continues to increase. It is significant of the standing attained by professional journalism that the Society of Women Journalists elected a trained nurse—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING—their President, to represent them in Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the Coronation of the King and Queen.

### PSYCHO-THERAPY.

#### III.

#### SUGGESTION.

By MISS GLADYS TATHAM.

(Concluded from page 507.)

For treatment by suggestion to be successful two conditions are necessary: the co-operation, or at least lack of resistance, on the patient's side, and sympathetic understanding on the part of the operator. Suggestion has been defined as "a process of communication of an idea to the sub-conscious mind in an unobtrusive manner, carrying conviction, when consciously there is no inclination for its acceptance, and logically there are no adequate grounds." If the objective, or conscious, mind is functioning actively it will be found almost impossible to communicate with the sub-conscious mind. It is for this reason that the room chosen for Psycho-therapeutic treatment is preferably quiet, and furnished in subdued tints. Anything vivid and startling may distract a patient to such an extent that passivity of mind is almost impossible. Most medical men have a talk with the patient, with the object of removing any trace of nervousness before attempting treatment. Their methods of producing a passive, receptive attitude vary, but a very usual one is to ask the patient to concentrate his mind on some drowsy mental picture. Suggestions that he is becoming sleepy, heavy-eyed, relaxed are then made, the operator meantime gently stroking the patient's forehead in a downward direction. In a short time the patient becomes very tranquil, and curative suggestions suitable to the individual case may be made. The patient is then told that all his drowsiness will go, and that he will awake at a given signal feeling perfectly all right. Suggestive treatment has been proved invaluable

in cases of dipsomania and drug habits. It is also used in all forms of nervous disorders, in functional dysmenorrhœa, amenorrhœa, etc. In a subject suffering from persistent insomnia a good night's rest may be procured without the use of any drug by post-hypnotic suggestion. Pain can be eased and mental obsessions removed psycho-therapeutically. During the passive condition patients may absolutely "go to sleep," or they may be merely tranquil and drowsy. In a certain number of subjects anæsthesia, or only analgesia, may be produced, and those unable to take ordinary anæsthetics may be operated on under hypnotic anæsthesia. Confinements have been painlessly conducted under the same influence.

The old idea that hypnotism was a dangerous power emanating from the devil has disappeared in the light of modern science! The psychologist can explain the method by which suggestion acts; the surgeon can demonstrate its value as a form of anæsthesia in certain cases; and the physician using it intelligently can do far more to relieve diseases, especially of nervous origin, than he could accomplish by drugs alone.

### THE MATRONS' COUNCIL.

The Meeting of the Matrons' Council on January 17th promises to be of unusual interest. After the formal business, Dr. Florence E. Willey will address the Council on the important question of "The Instruction of Nurses in Some Aspects of Venereal Disease." There will doubtless be a large attendance, as this group of contagious diseases—from which ignorant persons who come in contact with them run distressing risks—need including with those on which very careful instruction should be given during a nurse's training in every nursing school worthy of the name. At present this duty is shirked by many hospital authorities.

### A NURSING PIONEER.

Miss Lucy Osburn, a pioneer of trained nursing in Australia, who was trained at St. Thomas' Hospital, London, and became the first trained matron of the Sydney Hospital in 1868, and who, after splendid work in the then Colony of New South Wales, died in London in 1891, had received due recognition from Miss Mary Salmon in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. To Miss Osburn nursing was a holy mission, to be undertaken in a spirit of devotion. Her pupils still carry on her traditions and revere her memory.

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