

Miss Emily Marshall writes:—

Sick people are dependent upon their nurses for practically everything, and an observant nurse can often discover the cause of much mental suffering, anxieties, imaginary or otherwise, which so often retard recovery.

Both doctors and nurses are confided in by their patients, and professional etiquette binds them to silence in the interests of their patients. Very great help and comfort can be given and difficulties often smoothed away, relieving the mind of the invalid.

Some minor details adding to the comfort of a patient are:—

1. Consideration of the patient and friends.
2. Consideration for servants.
3. Special attention to cleanliness, neatness, and order.
4. Fresh air and ventilation without draughts.
5. Attention to patient's tray and food.
6. Cheerfulness, with quiet, using discretion.
7. Accommodate yourself to the rules of the household, giving as little trouble and expense as possible.

It is the little things which count, and nurses should be quiet in their movements, taking care not to knock against the bedstead in passing, to avoid noisily closing a door, sitting in a creaking chair, allowing the light to fall on the patient's face, or a looking-glass to stand in front of a patient; the rattling of window frames, rustling of paper, and clicking of knitting pins are often the source of great irritation.

Above all, be conscientious, reliable, punctual, courteous, firm, but kind and gentle, follow the doctor's instructions carefully, keep a daily report book and temperature chart, and do not trust to memory.

Miss C. Ryder mentions cleanliness as the chief thing which adds to anyone's comfort. The hair should be always tidy, the nails clean and cut neatly, and the teeth brushed after every meal. When changing the nightdress, to warm the fresh one is another little detail. The bed must be kept tidy and comfortable. If the case be abdominal, a pillow should be placed beneath the knees supported by tapes from the top of the bed; hot bottles must be refilled as often as required. A cosy dressing-gown, jacket, and shoes should always be to hand, and a bottle of eau de Cologne is nice to have. A few good flowers always make a room look bright. The water should be changed every day.

Miss A. M. Smith points out that often (especially at night) in chronic cases massage (subject to the doctor's approval) is soothing.

A hot-water bottle, a sponge bath, complete change of bedclothes, or even a hot drink given at the right moment are useful for restless cases.

Miss M. Bradshaw mentions that a nurse should be careful to regulate temperature and light. She should feel it a reproach if the patient has to ask for the light to be screened at night, or the blind to be drawn down by day. She should know if the room is too warm or not warm enough, if the patient wants more air or more heat. She should also avoid the use of scents, nor should she consume onions or other articles of food which scent the breath. For the same reason she should not indulge in cigarette smoking, nor should she wear creaking corsets or shoes.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What would you prepare for an intravenous infusion, and what precautions would you take if assisting in its administration?

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

The Grand Council of the above Society will hold its Annual Meeting on Saturday, November 23rd, at the Offices, 431, Oxford St., London, W. Tea will be at 4 p.m., the meeting at 4.30.

A notice will be sent to each member; but those who have a right to be present are the Hon. Officers, the Presidents, and the accredited delegates from each of the sixteen affiliated Societies; so that, as all are busy women, it is well to reserve the 23rd inst. for this particular engagement.

There will be a very satisfactory report presented of the part taken by the Council at the Meeting and Congress of the International Council of Nurses at Cologne, for which help a special letter of thanks has been sent from Germany.

As one of the Vice-Presidents and two of the Directors retire annually, nominations to fill these vacancies may be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Miss B. Cutler, before the date of the meeting.

Owing to the lamented death of Mrs. Kildare Treacy, one of the three Vice-Presidents, a member of the Irish Nurses' Association should be elected, as England is represented by Miss E. M. Musson, of Birmingham, and Scotland by Mrs. Strong. The two Directors to retire in rotation this year are Miss H. L. Pearse and Miss L. Morgan (the former of whom has an *ex-officio* seat as President of the School Nurses' League).

previous page

next page