

PROFESSIONAL REVIEW.

HANDBOOK OF MASSAGE FOR BEGINNERS.*

The Text Book of Massage, by Miss L. L. Despard, Member and Examiner Incorporated Society of Trained Masseuses, the author of the book now under review, is well known. In her preface she tells us the reasons which led to the compilation of "Massage for Beginners."

"A few months ago it was suggested to me that now, when so many people are learning to massage, in order to help the wounded soldiers, a small book on the subject, simply written, would prove of use." At the same time she lays emphasis on the fact that "while there is, and will be for a considerable time, a great need of massage treatment for our wounded soldiers, and for those discharged as unfit for future service, it is very essential that it should only be carried out by those who have obtained the massage certificate of the Incorporated Society of Trained Masseuses, or that of a recognised training school. The minimum time of preparation for the former examination is six months, a period which is all too short when one considers the amount of anatomy, theory of disease, and theory of massage which must be learnt in order to carry out the practical part of the work intelligently and with success. It should also be borne in mind by those who are anxious to help the wounded in this way, that many of the cases require the most skilled manipulation, and that their treatment should only be undertaken by or under the supervision of very experienced workers."

The author explains that massage (from the French *masser* = to knead) is "the scientific manual application of certain movements, such as *effleurage*, *stroking*, *pétrissage*, *kneading*, and *tapôtement*, to the human body, by which morbid conditions of the tissues are relieved. The practice of massage should only be undertaken by educated persons who, both by nature and

training, are qualified for the work. The natural qualifications are health, soft, dry, well-covered pliable hands, a sympathetic 'touch,' trustworthiness, refinement, kindness and tact."

The book deals briefly with "the influence of massage" on the nervous system, which it profoundly affects (this influence may be either stimulative or sedative, producing relief of pain and of nervous irritability), the blood vascular system, the lymph vascular system, the respiratory system, digestion, elimination, the muscular system, and bone. The classification and description of the various movements next follow,

including passive movements, active movements, and gymnastic positions. The five *fundamental positions* are standing, sitting, kneeling, lying, and hanging. A number of other positions, known as *derived positions*, arise from these.

By the courtesy of the publishers we are able to print the pictures illustrating this review, the first being that of a patient in the hanging fundamental position. In this position "the patient grasps a bar, broom, or some similar apparatus, fixed at such a height that the feet do not touch the ground while that patient is suspended. The hands should be slightly more than the width of the shoulders apart. They are pronated in making the grip. The arms, trunk, and legs are fully extended. The head is held erect or may be thrown slightly back.

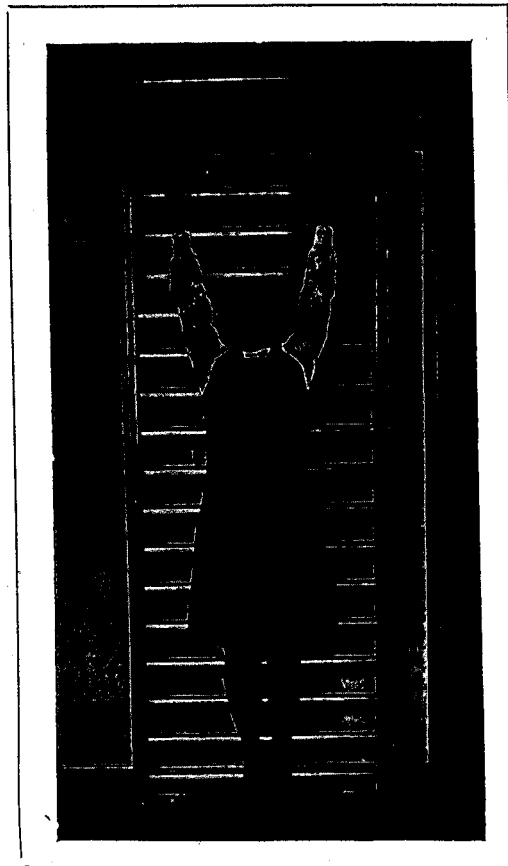
"In this position the shoulder and arm muscles should work to some extent to prevent the entire weight of the body coming on the hands. The muscles

engaged in maintaining the position are the flexors of the fingers, and the muscles just mentioned."

A clear description is given both of the methods employed in giving general massage, and also massage of sections of the body for various diseases and affections, injuries or deformities.

A chapter is devoted to the application of massage in functional disorders of the nervous system, such as neurasthenia, neuralgia, neuritis, writer's cramp, chorea, and insomnia.

A particularly interesting chapter at the present time is that devoted to massage in cases of bullet and shrapnel wounds, frostbite (so called), and



HANGING, FUNDAMENTAL POSITION.

* Henry Frowde and Hodder & Stoughton, Oxford Press Warehouse, Falcon Square, London, E.C. 6s.

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