

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,495.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1916,

Vol. LVII.

EDITORIAL.

SMALL ECONOMIES.

We are told insistently that it is imperative the nation should husband all its available resources, and it therefore behoves every patriotic man and woman to consider in what directions he or she can economize. This does not necessarily mean the saving of large sums of money. Only comparatively few are able to do this, but we cannot shirk our obligations because this is impossible.

To be practical we must consider what economies are possible in our own special sphere.

Take for instance a hospital, where every economy consistent with efficiency should always be the rule, are there no small economies which we can practise which will help to lessen the heavy additional expenditure which all hospitals have to bear just now?

There is always the question of dressings and bandages. The particular dressing used is of course decided by the surgeon but even so we have known an experienced sister draw the attention of the visiting surgeon to the cost of a dressing he was using, with the result that he substituted one which he considered equally efficient at about half the cost. Then it is not only in the material used that economy can be effected. In the cutting of dressings and the method of their use, there may be either economy or waste, and the cases do just as well under a frugal as under a wasteful régime.

In the use of bandages nurses are often wasteful. We remember an eminent surgeon once asking a nurse, who was slitting up an unsoiled absorbent bandage with a pair of scissors, what she was doing. She replied that she was removing the bandage that he might inspect the limb, and was

electrified by his response, "Well, you don't remove your clothes at night that way, do you? But I suppose you would if they were hospital property."

Then take the question of linen. Frequent changes of fresh and clean linen are we know essential to the welfare of the sick, but sheets and other linen are often sent to the wash in hospital which could perfectly well be used again, while, in private houses, there is perhaps no more fruitful source of annoyance than the lavish use of linen by trained nurses, and not only so, but they will demand for an infectious case the finest and best linen, and they do not realize, as a frugal housekeeper does, that this expensive and cherished linen considerably deteriorates by being steeped in strong disinfectants, or that linen is often stained by the drugs used in treating a patient.

Another fruitful source of waste is soap—soap left in water to melt—small pieces of soap thrown away which might be boiled down together, or used through a flannel bag.

Then there are gas and electric light. What Matron does not know how bills mount up not from their legitimate but from illegitimate use. Electric lights left burning in empty rooms, gas rings burning at the full height when a kettle is boiling nearly to bursting point, large rings lighted when small ones would be equally efficacious. All this represents a needless and therefore wasteful expenditure of many pounds in the course of the year which most vigilant oversight cannot wholly reduce. Until thrift and carefulness are a matter of conscience with every member of a hospital staff from the highest to the lowest waste is bound to occur.

Are other instances needed, we have only to mention the monthly breakages in crockery and in thermometers to show directions in which increased care can be exercised, "if there be first the willing mind."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)