

year, rising two pounds annually to a maximum of thirty-six pounds—not the wage of a decent cook. Out of this handsome emolument the sister has to find the wherewithal for her annual holiday, her pocket money, and incidental living expenses, and her dress when not wearing uniform; and though given the material for her uniform she is actually required to pay twenty-five or thirty shillings a year for its make up. If sick and off duty her salary ceases (not always!—Ed.) and she receives in lieu of it seven shillings and sixpence a week from the National Insurance Fund.”

We are glad to find a medical man taking an interest in the conditions of employment of trained nurses. It is very exceptional.

The second chapter contains general remarks on antisepsis and asepsis in surgery, and then the author traces a patient from his entry into the hospital or home for an operation, throughout his stay there to his departure, and emphasises the most important points for the nurse to attend to during each of the stages.

ANTISEPSIS AND ASEPSIS.

The author states that “in order that the nurse may have a full appreciation of her duties and responsibilities in modern surgery, it is necessary that she should clearly comprehend the meaning of the word ‘sepsis’ and of its antitheses ‘anti-sepsis,’ and ‘asepsis.’ Without this knowledge she will not understand the why and wherefore of her actions. She will confuse asepsis with cleanliness; she will never grasp the principle and acquire the habit which must become a second nature to her if she is to make herself a really efficient surgical nurse.”

In regard to the preparation of a patient for operation, the author considers it a very important matter which in an operation of magnitude may last several days. He by no means advocates undue delay, and considers that the sooner it is done the better, consistently with the precautions necessary to ensure safety. But such precautions in his opinion involve a systematic observation of the patient.

He then goes very fully into the details of the observations. In regard to the actual preparation of the skin the author employs the iodine method, which is fully described. The effectiveness of the alcoholic solution of iodine is generally regarded as being due to its hardening effect on the tissues, combined with its great penetrative power.

The author lays great stress on the toilet of the mouth, and is of opinion that many of the cases of so-called anæsthetic pneumonia and parotitis following operation, are due to septic matter being inhaled into the lungs, or passing up the parotid duct from the mouth.

Lieut.-Colonel Childe considers the costume worn at operations of the first importance, and this is described in detail. We are able by the courtesy of the publishers to reproduce the frontispiece of the book, a Theatre Sister prepared for operation. She does not, however, show her goloshes.

“NURSING PROBLEMS AND OBLIGATIONS.”*

(Continued from page 72.)

Miss Parsons, in her valuable advice to nurses, deals categorically—from the ethical and professional standpoint—with the needs of (1) the probationary Nurse, (2) the student Nurse, and (3) the graduate Nurse, and their correlation with other workers. One of the essential aims of the book is obviously to create and stimulate a high sense of corporate responsibility among Nurses. She sets the honour of their training school before them, and then goes on to show that the dignity and honour of the *whole* Profession is theirs to uphold or debase. We are glad that she deals in detail with “Courtesy and Kindness,” commencing with this gospel of truth: “Granting that we have religious feeling, how may we best show it? Good manners, which means regard for others, and kindness, which also means unselfish service, will characterise our conduct.” The writer, who is essentially an educationist, in her talks to senior Nurses in particular, again urges upon them the necessity of keeping abreast with higher nursing education, and recommends them to join the National League of Nursing Education (of which she is President). In speaking of well-trained, experienced nurses, no longer in active practice, she says: “If nurses keep in touch with their schools and with the progress of nursing activities, they can be most valuable on hospital boards, on training school committees, and in district nursing associations. Having had inside knowledge of hospitals, they can interpret the hospital to the community, and as private citizens they are in the way of intelligently interpreting the needs of the community to the hospital. . . . One who has retired to private life can also hold official positions, act on committees and do much to promote the social side of their organisations.” There are certain persons in this country who would do well to take this wise judgment to heart. Miss Parsons takes for granted that all aspiring nurses will wish to join self-governing nursing associations; she says in speaking of the State Association: “This is the medium through which the graduates from different schools become acquainted, and in various States they have procured registration laws which are stimulating our nursing schools to higher educational standards. These legislative activities have considerably enlarged our horizon. . . . In the work of the State and National Associations, the nurse learns that no school can afford to stand alone on its pedestal of excellence. . . . In order to give the experience needed by a well-trained general nurse, the large, the small, the general, and the special hospitals have had to open their wards to affiliations with each other. . . .”

* By Sara E. Parsons, R.N. Superintendent of the Training School for Nurses, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston.

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