

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF REST.

The title is somewhat ambitious for the simple reasoning which follows, embodying some thoughts from a worker to workers in one of the busiest of Professions, rather than a scholastic exposition of phrases, or play upon words and platitudes.

Let us consider first, wherein does Rest consist? Is it attained by relaxation of body and brain, or by change of employment?

Both these elements may enter in, yet neither is complete in itself to rebuild worn nerve tissue, and act as a complete antidote to physical and mental tiredness. When we are weary—and what Nurse is not often weary?—we need physical rest assuredly; but underlying our conscious aches are deeper springs of action whose function it is to re-vitalise us. That subtle Sub-conscious Stratum in which is stored the reserve of life is ever ready, when called upon, to repair the waste.

No one denies in these latter days the power of Thought as a controlling and vitalising factor in our lives: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Modern psychology, however, goes further, and affirms that Thought is the willing ambassador and servant of the mind, and its primary duty is to reinforce and build up Character. Those who have applied themselves to the inbuilding of constructive thought into their sub-conscious mind will attest the accuracy of this statement.

The building is raised, stone upon stone, by steady persistent effort.

Someone has said, in language rather forceful than grammatical: "We see what we bring with us the power to see." In other words the eye is the retina of the mind; and impressions stored there regulate the vision of external things. So our perspective, or outlook on life, is curiously wrought and fashioned in the lower parts of our sub-conscious selves.

Let us see now what relation these facts bear to the "Psychology of Rest." They are stated to prove that we are not Creatures of Circumstances; rather are we, under God, each one the Controller of his or her own destiny. Do you say that is a daring assertion? It is. Nevertheless, if in our sub-conscious mind we are not linked to the Divine, nay, more, if its function is not the forging and maintenance of that link, then the object of the Sub-conscious, in our complicated mechanism, becomes obscure, and its practical usefulness in daily life nil. All our powers and faculties are designed by God for services to ourselves and to our fellows.

In Nursing, whether in hospital or private

work, while we endeavour to adapt ourselves to the needs of the moment, whatever these may be, the attitude of mind, or attribute of mind we require above all others, is the ability to "live above our work." The *very best* is the standard of every true nurse, and to attain the result earned by our best efforts our mental attitude must be *restful*.

The presence, no less than the ministrations, should create an atmosphere of rest.

How is this to be attained? How can one eliminate worry and anxiety? First, by Faith in God. "Casting *all* our care upon Him."

Professor Santayana, of Harvard University, says: "God *can* relax morbid strains, loosen suppressed instincts, iron out the creases of the soul, and discipline us in sympathy, sweetness and peace." Secondly, by faith in oneself, as the Instrument or Vehicle of Divine power. "Ye *shall* receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Emerson says: "No one can cheat you out of ultimate success but yourself."

Like much that used to be regarded as sentimental sophistry, the idea of attracting success to oneself, is now admitted by modern thought as scientific reasoning and sound logic; and practical application proves its worth.

When one talks of "creating" an Atmosphere of Rest in one's work among sick folk in mind and body, one is thinking of something which means mental exercise. It is not a condition of mind which is easily attained, but consists rather in holding the lamp of faith high and steady, that it may lighten our path, and pluckily plodding on in the work that lies to our hand.

Attention to duty alone is not sufficient; without the Ideal, one cannot consecrate the Practical, and our Ideals build in the "right stuff" into the sub-conscious mind, a structure against which the storms of life beat in vain; an Investment which yields us a living wage in Rest and Restfulness.

In the daily round be it ours to set before our mental vision a high standard, and never to lower that standard to indulge ourselves or suit others.

Some of us, indeed most of us, will need the tie of a corporate fellowship to enable us to achieve these ideals. It is this bond which is supplied by the Guild of Health. This society has an office at 3, Bedford Square, W.C.1, and produces an ever-growing number of pamphlets dealing with its scope and methods.

In our profession one so often hears the plaint, "One must think of oneself some-

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