

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

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

No. 1,715.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1921.

Vol. LXVI

## EDITORIAL.

### THE LADY WITH THE DUSTER.

One of the difficulties in connection with the examinations for probationers in the past has been that, as they have mainly been conducted by medical examiners as to the theoretical knowledge of candidates, there has been a tendency on the part of some of the examinees to underestimate the importance of the practical side of their work; whereas theory is of importance because it enables them to understand the scientific principles underlying practice, and to apply those principles intelligently.

We hope, when the Schedule of Training arranged by the General Nursing Council is promulgated, that emphasis will be laid on the necessity for systematic instruction of probationers in the details of ward management, for, without it, whatever theoretical knowledge they may have acquired, if they lack practical knowledge, they must fall short of the standard required for the care of the sick, whether in hospital, or private, district, or other sections of nursing.

One of the most important branches in which a nurse should be proficient is Domestic Ward Management, in which are included the method of cleaning, the care of furniture, bedsteads and cupboards, the care of bedding, linen, blankets, waterproofs, the care of kitchen, bathroom and lavatory, sanitary methods of cleaning utensils, baths, lavatories, crockery, disposal and disinfection of soiled linen and dressings, cost and management of stores, &c.

It may be thought that the majority of these items only include knowledge which every girl should possess when she enters a hospital for training, for she should have learnt them as matters of housewifery, concerning which every woman who aspires to keep a house of her own should be conversant and competent. Most Matrons, however, will, we believe, endorse

our statement that the majority of probationers who enter a hospital for training do not know how to handle a duster, and are ignorant of the fundamental details of good housewifery.

We hope that one of the indirect effects of the systematisation of training under State authority will be to instil into the minds of both parents and children the honourable nature of domestic work, and the important place it should hold in the education of every girl.

And, therefore, in the examinations of the General Nursing Councils, we hope that a prominent place will be given to examinations, conducted by experienced registered nurses, in which the examinees will be required to demonstrate their practical knowledge of the fundamentals of good nursing, which are to keep the surroundings of the patient clean and sanitary, and to make him comfortable. Nurses should take a pride in excelling in this branch of nursing, and a high place in this section of the Council's examination should be regarded as an honourable distinction.

On such a foundation it is easy to build up a good working knowledge of the principles of asepsis, but without a true appreciation of the necessity for cleanliness, sweetness and light in all departments, as a basis on which to build one's work in the care of the sick, a nurse will never, *au fond*, appreciate the importance of asepsis, and her mechanical work in this respect may at any moment break down, because it is not founded on understanding.

The nurses of the present day enter into a heritage won for them by their predecessors, and will have opportunities of systematised instruction which these predecessors too often lacked. We hope they will bring to their work the same selflessness, enthusiasm and devotion to the sick which has resulted in the high estimation in which the work of British nurses is held all over the world at the present day.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)