

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING THE PHYSIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN THE TRAINING OF NURSES.

The hospital is the Nurses' University; she matriculates as a probationer, and, after three years *in statu pupillari*, graduates as trained nurse, ready to undertake not only the nursing of the sick and the administration of Wards and Homes for them, but ready with a foundation on which can be built allied and other services to the community. Some of these will be partly nursing, partly social, and partly health service, such as district nursing, health visiting or welfare work; or they may be along some special line as midwifery, infant welfare, or massage.

Therefore, once the principle is accepted that the hospital is to be the training ground for both nursing and the other and wider outlets that may be open to nurses, the effort must be made to make this period of training serve, not only its primary purpose of teaching how to nurse and manage sick folk, but also its secondary purpose of being educative, particularly in the direction of giving a knowledge of those basic principles on which the science of health and its preservation (largely comprised under the term Physiology in its wider sense) are built.

With these ideas in my mind, when asked to draw up suggestions for a short course of lectures to nurses on gynæcology, I felt that the old-fashioned lines on which gynæcological nursing is taught would not serve the purpose, and, therefore, endeavoured to make the course cover the physiology of reproduction as well as the diseases of the female reproductive system. The reproductive system is entirely ignored by the physician, and generally also by the physiologist, though it is as much an integral part of medicine as the digestive or circulatory system. Its physiology is both interesting and educative, and further than that, is a subject that every woman who has any knowledge of nursing and hygiene or who aspires to work in public health service ought to know. Nurses are frequently questioned by patients who do not care to go to a doctor, and they occasionally have to give emergency aid when in a house for other reasons, and therefore ought to look upon this as an essential part of their training in hygiene.

This scheme has been criticised as being more work for midwives than for nurses. Certainly it includes the anatomy and physiology

of the female reproductive tract, together with the development and wonderful action of the placenta in serving as the epitome of the human respiratory, alimentary and excretory functions, and the physiology of the evacuation of the uterus, with the startling changes that take place in the article of birth, by which the foetus becomes a child and begins its separate existence. This study also opens out a consideration of birth-injuries and infections, and what may be done in child-bed for their prevention, and thus logically leads up to a consideration of the diseases that may affect the reproductive tract and such nursing details as may be peculiar to this work. It further is a necessary preliminary to the physiology of the infant and developing child, and as such ought to be taught to all nurses who may wish to take up the nursing of sick children and district work or health visiting.

I have given lectures on this plan for some years past to the nurses at St. Thomas's, and have recognised how much they have appreciated the subject being treated on this broad basis. Lectures are not the proper means of teaching nurses nursing work, but they are valuable in giving them wider interest in their work, and fresh ideas which open out to them new aspects.

All schemes of this kind must be looked upon as suggestions to the individual teacher; some will find one part of the scheme attractive and make more of it, and others some other part; but so long as each teacher makes what he has to teach educative in his own way the object of the scheme will be attained. It clearly would be a mistake to make it a hard-and-fast system, without allowing the individual teacher to develop it as he finds best for himself and his pupils.

J. S. FAIRBAIRN.

## THE STERILISATION OF CATGUT.

Miss Rachel Murphy, R.N., gives the following two methods of sterilising catgut in the *American Journal of Nursing*, which she states have been successfully used for a number of years:—

### METHOD I.

The preparation of catgut is possibly the most difficult problem with which the operating-room supervisor has to deal. Any error in technique may result in complete destruction of the entire lot, or in imperfect sterilisation. It

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)