

of our Profession in the future. As it is, there is little hope for the evolution and humanising of Nursing so long as materialism is the essence of its creed.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF A DISTRICT NURSE ATTENDING A CASE OF ILLNESS, TOWARDS THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY?

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss M. Ramsey, S.R.N., Enmore Road, South Norwood.

A district nurse must avoid above everything being dictatorial and standoffish in her dealings with the relatives of patients. She will accomplish her work most thoroughly, and obtain the respect of those among whom she works by recognising in them her brothers and sisters who are entitled to her help and advice. She will endeavour to instil into the minds of the near relatives the elementary principles of ventilation, the importance of cleanliness, and the strict observance of the orders for the administration of medicine, and for the general attendance on the invalid.

The nurse can instruct how to keep the homes healthy and improved by: (a) Example; by methodical working during her visits, clearing up everything when she has finished, emptying slops, burning rubbish, and ventilating room. (b) Teaching the value of fresh air, soap and water, regular habits in regard to meals, sleep, and recreation; advising best methods of cleaning, such as damp dusting and sweeping, economical shopping, and food values. (c) Putting them into touch with such authorities as can assist them to have structural and sanitary defects remedied, such as windows that will not open, blocked drains, leaky taps, &c. To carry this out the nurse must first establish friendly relations with the patient's family, so that their confidence is gained, and then give her advice with tact and without showing a critical spirit. A hint dropped here and there will be more effectual than much talking.

If it should be necessary to find out if the patient is insured, ask questions carefully and with a sympathetic manner. Allow the family to talk freely; they will often give the required information during conversation. Should the relatives be unwilling to divulge the necessary information, they will often change their attitude if it is explained that it is merely to safeguard them from being charged a fee they cannot afford, or from paying at all if their approved society is one of those who will pay for the nursing of their members.

The district nurse must never forget, as she goes her daily round, that her personality will count for much. A kindly smile and a cheery word are a great power all over the world. The district nurse can do much by what she is, what she does, and what she says. Unconsciously, she will exercise an influence in the patient's home of which she will not be aware, and her word will have great weight. In her work she can show to mothers and relatives many of the simple remedies and preventive measures that will prevent serious illness. She will teach the necessity of temperance in all things, and advise what should be done in the early stages of illness. With regard to the men, she can do a great deal in talking to them about the health not only of their families, but also of the community, and awaken them to a sense of their responsibility as citizens.

During her visits she will notice others in the family who are sickly, and can refer them to the proper sources for treatment.

A district nurse needs much tact and patience in dealing with relatives of a sick patient. She must remember that in the homes of the people she is their guest, and she must treat them accordingly, while at the same time she must maintain sufficient authority for the carrying out of treatment. Every home presents many social problems, and which play such an important part in recovery or otherwise. A sense of humour is a great asset.

Any alterations *re* furniture or arrangement of sick room, suggestions for cleaning same, need to be made with the greatest care and tact, otherwise the family may be offended and object.

The nurse should keep before her what the ideal should be, and aim at its attainment by doing a little at a time.

Miss M. G. Bielby writes: "The most valuable side of a District Nurse's service to the individual and the State should be her preventive work. We are told that 85 per cent. of illness is due to ignorance. At least 50 per cent. of this, we may safely infer, might be prevented by timely health teaching on the part of the District Nurse to the families of her patients."

HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors receive honourable mention:—Miss M. G. Bielby, Miss May Thompson, and Miss Ellen Harris.

QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

What nursing measures other than drugs may be used (a) to quieten a restless or delirious patient and to induce sleep; (b) to check vomiting; (c) to induce the skin to act?

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