

The want of *necessary* occupation among English girls must have struck everyone. How usual is it to see families of five or six daughters at home, in the higher ranks, with no other occupation in life but a class in a Sunday School. What is that? A chapter of the Bible is opened at random, and the spiritual doctor, with no more idea of her patient's spiritual anatomy than she has a plan of improving it, explains at random. . . . If, then, there are many women who live unmarried, and many more who pass the third of the usual term of life unmarried, and if intellectual occupation is not meant to be their end in life, what are they to do with that thirst for action, useful action, which every woman feels who is not diseased in mind or body? God planted it there. God, Who has created nothing in vain. What were His intentions with regard to "unmarried women and widows?" How did He mean to employ them, to satisfy them?

In the fourth century St. Chrysostom speaks of forty Deaconesses at Constantinople—we find them in the Western Church as late as the eighth, in the Eastern, as the twelfth century. . . . In Amsterdam, we read how "the Deaconess sat in her place at church with a little birchen rod in hand, to correct the children," and "how she called upon the young maidens for their services, when these were sick and how she was obeyed like a mother in Israel." It thus appears that, long previous to the establishment of the Order of Sisters of Mercy, by S. Vincent de Paule in 1633, the importance of the office of Deaconess had been recognised by all divisions of the Christians; and they accordingly existed, *free from vows or cloistered cells*. So many believe this to be an institution borrowed from the Roman Catholic Church exclusively and on that account, are prejudiced against it. We see, therefore, that God has not implanted an impulse in the hearts of women, without preparing a way for them to obey it.

Why did not the institution spread and flourish further? Perhaps this may be sufficiently explained by the fact that there were no nursery-grounds, preparatory schools for Deaconesses, so that fitness for their office was, so to speak, accidental.

#### The Hospital and Mother-House of the Deaconesses.

That sickness is one of the means sent by God to soften the heart, is generally acknowledged. Let us go into one of the usual hospitals and see how this precious opportunity is turned to account. Instead of a school, whence the patient's return home to their families, often renewed, generally improved, we see as every one conversant with hospitals well knows, a school, it may almost be said, for immorality and impropriety—inevitable where women of bad character are admitted as nurses, to become worse by their contact with the male patients and the young surgeons—inevitable where the nurses have to perform *every* office in the male wards, which is undesirable to exact from women of good character, how much more so from those of bad. . . . We see the nurses drinking, we see the neglect at night owing to their falling asleep. Where women undertake so toilsome an office, for hire, and not for love, it cannot be otherwise. We see the patients procuring spirits by feeing the nurses;—and yet there are many surgeons who still think that such women will tend their patients better than those who undertake the task from Christian motives. They are afraid of their patients being "excited" by "pious nurses." . . .

But we are not describing the Hospital as a hospital, but as a Training School for Deaconesses. Probation is its grand principle—one which we are familiar with in all God's dealing with us; one which St. Paul speaks of, when he says, "And let these also first be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless."

## DIET AND CARE OF THE SURGICAL CASE.\*

By REYNOLD H. BOYD, M.B., Ch.B.(N.Z.), F.R.C.S. (Edin.)

Dr. Reynold H. Boyd, Ch.B.(N.Z.), F.R.C.S.(Edin.) in his preface to this book "Diet and Care of the Surgical Case" declares the scope of this work. "It has not been the aim of this book to present unusual or original methods, but rather to collect from various sources, scattered and difficult of access, a number of established lines of treatment. Nor does the book pretend to be complete, dealing, as it does, in generalities, and giving details for only a limited number of special conditions."

It is perhaps intended for the medical, rather than the nursing profession, but it is illuminating and interesting reading.

Old methods and new are both described, and some long established customs emphatically repudiated. The author is open-minded; after describing certain methods in detail, he adds, "It must be admitted, however, that cases recover equally well in the absence of treatment."

From a review of general dietetic measures, and preparation and after-care of operation cases, Dr. Boyd passes to a detailed description of various treatments for special cases, chiefly ailments of the alimentary canal. The second part deals with "Surgical Treatments in Childhood," and is followed by an Appendix with Recipes, etc., and an Index.

Some of the less familiar ideas may be mentioned, for instance, the extreme importance of the prevention of peristalsis in peritonitis till improvement is established; the error of over-preparation for operation by aperients and enemata, specially with children (this, of course, has been realised to be unnecessary by some since the war, but many surgeons still order both means of preparation, at least in all abdominal cases); vaccination against streptococci and colon bacilli, or production of leucocytosis before abdominal operations where infection is feared; chloretone per rectum immediately before operation as a deterrent to post-anæsthetic vomiting; the avoidance of constrained attitudes and the encouragement of movement and deep-breathing after operation to prevent thrombosis, the usefulness of ice-cream and chopped worsted when a foreign body has been swallowed.

Much stress is laid on the importance of diet in many conditions where it is not usually recognised, *e.g.*, gonorrhoea; for children in surgical wards after operations for rickets or tuberculosis. Dr. Boyd mentions the decided reaction against stuffing tubercular patients with fat and carbo-hydrates, and the recognition now of the value of meat. Glucose has entirely superseded saline for rectal injection. He says it is "the only substance of any definite nutritive value to be absorbed by the colonic mucous membrane. Water is preferable to all saline solutions, it being more readily absorbed."

Those who do not know the way and wherefore of the term "Pelidisi" should read to see. The book is well worth attention.

K. M. L.

Under the title "Florence Nightingale' 1820-1856. A study of her life down to the end of the Crimean War," Miss O'Malley has given us a new and interesting picture of Miss Nightingale. It is published by Thornton Butterworth, Ltd.

\*H. K. Lewis & Co., Ltd. 5s net.

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