

the development of which solely differentiates us from our friends the animals, permeates every aspect of our existence whilst we dwell upon this earth and is subject to the earth's limitations and conditions.

He alluded also to that aspect of psychology which is involved, not only in the study of medicine, but in the study of education in the main as applied to the handling of children; a particularly important aspect for nurses in view of the mental state of patients in times of illness which often showed a tendency to be "child-like," without being "childish" between which there is a great difference.

The term "nurse" is applied to some one who is looking after, with skill, it is presumed, another being who is weaker and in need of help, and in this, patients and children are exactly the same.

It then becomes clear what an all-important rôle psychology forms in every aspect of handling patients.

But it was not only for people who are ill that a knowledge of psychology was required. It entered into every aspect of life; in fact there was no aspect of life in which the handling of a situation may create good, or wrongly handled does create greater harm. Reference was made to the wrong-doer turned into a criminal and worse, a permanent criminal, by unconscious psychological handling. Many a home situation, unpleasant in potentiality, has been made impossible in reality through a lack of knowledge of the psychological make-up of individuals; many a battle has been lost by a lack of knowledge of the psychology of the opposing combatant; and this applied to battles for civil rights as well as what is understood as warfare.

Many a child, brilliant in his or her possibilities, has been ruined in effectiveness for life by psychological mis-handling by those responsible for it.

In view of this, there has now grown up a great branch of medicine and education called "Child Psychology."

Dr. Armitage then referred to the psychology of the unconscious mind, which he said "was the only psychology recognised as a science until arose the genius of Freud," the first great writer and thinker and observer to emphasise in full measure to his colleagues and to the public the importance of a working knowledge of what is called the "subconscious mind."

In the field of experimental psychology, the lecturer went on to say that "Investigators have performed experiments on the minds of adults and children and on the minds of animals, the latter especially leading to fascinating and unexpected results. In ways, contrary to what might be expected, the living creation seems to be one great cousinhood in mental matters."

He commented on the "difference in outlook" from that in which our forebears in mid-Victorian times in many quarters hailed with horror any association with the wonderful, fascinating, and delicate animals with all their emotions, their desires, their joys and sorrows, and their appreciation of beauty, which he illustrated by instancing the beauty and habits of humming-birds and bird life in general.

In applying this great word "Psychology" so often used well, and equally so often used ill, to the rôle of nursing, actually many psychologies must be kept in remembrance.

There entered the psychology of ourselves, the psychology of the doctors we work under, the psychology of our many and diverse patients, and last but not least, the psychology of our patients' relatives.

He reminded his audience of the "golden rule" that the patient is in a state of childishness, or "regression," whatever the nature of the illness; frequently in marked discomfort and pain and helplessness.

In referring to the psychology of the doctors he said, "there is no gratitude in the world equal to that experienced

by a busy, able, sensitive, care-burdened doctor, for the nurse who helps him, by understanding, by trying to acquire a little psychological knowledge of what his objects are and how his mind works."

The most important psychology was that of the nurse's own. "For every point in the patient's psychology that mattered there are five points in that of the nurse." For every little lapse that the patient exhibits in the course of the illness, there may be five in the nurse in attendance. This fact should neither amuse nor dishearten, but it should help to keep in remembrance that "for every crying and helpless need of the patient there may be five points in the psychological make-up of the nurse which will help him more than all the doctors and all the physic in the world."

A great and noble privilege which in no branch of life's activity can a nurse, by trying to be great, trying to use her strong points, trying to find out what are, and to improve her weaker ones, be of greater service to humanity."

"Act on it." "In this you will find the greatest fruition of which life is possible."

After enumerating the many qualities that go to the making of a good nurse, Dr. Armitage summed up with the advice, "Be the most lovely person you can be," not in personal features, though this may help, "Be lovely in your character," "unselfish in your attitude," "dwell within yourself in the highest conception of which the mind of man, your psychology, is capable. Laugh outside yourself if you like, but retain this lovely flower within; its scent will make fragrant your patient's sick room and help to strengthen him psychologically in his trouble better than almost any kind of nursing . . . the great thing is it requires no talk."

Just as it is impossible for a doctor to handle his patients regarding them solely as physical beings, patients must be regarded as a whole with minds as well as bodies, "Just as if when we plunge into deeper philosophy we feel that they have souls as well." We can only handle our patients well if we take into account all these three aspects of their existence, their pleasures and their pains, and the psychology of these three parts is also of great importance to nurses.

In the great Hospital at Bethlem, "for so long a cousin of the great hospital of St. Bartholomew's," patients are treated mainly from the mental point of view, but physical medicine is pursued as thoroughly at Bethlem as it is at St. Bartholomew's, the mental aspect being more in evidence.

Dr. Armitage concluded with an invitation to the members of the League to come and take tea at the Royal Bethlem Hospital, Monks Orchard, Eden Park, near Beckenham.

The President thanked Dr. Armitage both for his kind invitation and his address, and in expressing her gratitude she coupled with her thanks an expression of the sympathy of the members of the League to Dr. Porter Phillips, which she begged him to convey. The members then adjourned for the Social Gathering and tea in the Nurses' Sitting-room, at which Dr. Armitage was a warmly welcomed guest, for his many interested listeners had great admiration and thanks still to bestow for his great kindness in coming to address the members of the League.

G. LE GEYT.

#### LEAGUE OF SISTER TUTORS:

A dinner for members of the above League and their friends will be held on January 25th, 1936, at 6.45 p.m., at Prompts Corner, 19, Rupert Street, Shaftesbury Avenue. Tickets, price 4s. 6d. per head, and full particulars, can be had from the Secretary, Miss Challenger, D.N., Bethnal Green Hospital, Cambridge Road, E.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)