

PROFESSIONAL REVIEW.

TEXT BOOK OF CHRONIC DISEASES.

Opportunely* there has appeared, when the nursing of the chronic sick is in the limelight and certain retrograde persons are seeking to break down the one portal to the State Register of Nurses and to establish under the authority of the State an inferior order of nurses for the sick poor, a "Text Book of Chronic Diseases." A Handbook for Nurses, which disposes once and for all of the contention that the subject can be dismissed by the admission to the State Register of Nurses of those who have not attained, and are not competent to attain, to the standard defined as essential for those admitted to the State Register.

The author of the "Text Book of Chronic Diseases," Dr. R. Gordon Cooke, M.D., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Medical Superintendent of the City Hospital, Derby, and Examiner to the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, is readily able to show, that the case cannot be met by adding another supplementary Register to those already recognised, inasmuch as those at present recognised are of nurses trained for three years, and expert in special branches of nursing—infectious diseases, children's diseases, mental diseases, of which they have given proof of efficiency by examination.

The Nurses of the Chronic Sick on the contrary must be competent to nurse every kind of disease, for example, chronic heart disease, chronic arthritis, advanced cancer, the senile patient, all of which need constant, unremitting, skilled and devoted care, the senile patient helpless and dependent on the tender handling of the expert nurse, those suffering from chronic diseases of the respiratory system, which call for skilled nursing and energetic treatment, rapidly advancing cases of pulmonary tuberculosis in which hemoptysis is liable to occur, sometimes with warning, sometimes without. In either case watchfulness and alertness are imperative.

Chronic nephritis sometimes accompanied by pericarditis, cramps, numbness, twistings, pleurisy and congestion of the lungs and pneumonia, sooner or later passes into a state of uræmia, unless death occurs, owing to severe intercurrent diseases to which these patients are specially liable. Premonitory signs are the onset of additional symptoms to those already present in a case of chronic nephritis, and sooner or later the patient has uræmic convulsions and becomes unconscious. "It should never be assumed, however, that a case of uræmic coma is going to be fatal, except in obviously hopeless cases with exceedingly high blood urea contents, as recovery from coma takes place even in unpromising cases. Every effort should therefore be directed towards the treatment of such a case."

Chronic Disease.

Chronic diseases of the nervous system are then dealt with in which the condition of the patient is such that recovery or improvement is not likely to take place to a sufficient degree to enable the patient to lead even a limited normal existence. The bedridden paralysed patient needs very careful attention. Confusion as by persistent restlessness usually indicates an early fatal issue. Many more instances might be given, but enough has been said to show that the chronic sick need just as skilled and careful nursing as other hospital patients. If we are frank we shall own that the question is *au fond* an economic one. That a system has grown up whereby the Lady Bountiful dispenses cheap and inferior nursing, and herself ignorant, sees no reason why it should not suffice for the poor. We have not forgotten the noble Lord who when the Nurses

Registration Bill was before Parliament expressed the opinion that two classes of nurses are needed, "one to attend important operations by eminent surgeons and the other to care for the ordinary ailments of the poor."

To the true nurse no such distinction is admissible, and the result of the meeting of representatives of nurses' associations on the care of the chronic sick showed that they are alive to the question, and refuse to subscribe to the disintegration of the Register, and the unworthy demand that for the sake of cheapness, a new part shall be added to the Register containing the names of nurses for the poor who have not attained the standard declared necessary for the rich.

Admittedly there are divided grades of chronic sick, for the question is a very large one. Those who require nursing, however, should be entitled to the same standard of nursing as those about whose ability to pay there is no question and therefore no problem. They are entitled to and receive an adequate standard of nursing.

THE PASSING BELL.

MISS G. E. VINCENT, R.R.C., LATE MATRON, LEICESTER ROYAL INFIRMARY.

We regret to report the death, on December 31st, 1936, of Miss Clara Elizabeth Vincent, who was appointed Matron of the Leicester Royal Infirmary at the end of 1912 on the retirement of Miss Rogers, who had occupied the position of Matron of the Infirmary for a period of 33 years.

Miss Vincent was trained at and was formerly Assistant Matron of St. Thomas's Hospital, London.

The 17 years of Miss Vincent's Matronship at Leicester covered a period when the Hospital made great strides, the bed accommodation increasing from 270 to 486, and in this period hundreds of nurses were trained, and are now distributed not only in the British Isles but abroad.

She had hardly settled in her new post when, at the outbreak of the War, she had to accept the responsibilities of Principal Matron of the 5th Northern General Hospital, which covered the whole of this area, and she was awarded the Royal Red Cross for services rendered.

She was greatly interested in Missionary work, and gave a great deal of time to the Movement, encouraging strong financial support for the funds of the Missionary Society.

While in Oxton Miss Vincent has been keenly interested in the local Hospital and has served on the Committee of Management.

Her death will be sincerely mourned by many pupils and friends by whom she was greatly beloved.

MRS. FRANCES ANN HAYES.

We regret to report the death at St. Bartholomew's Hospital on December 27th last, of Mrs. Frances Ann Hayes, the wife of Mr. Thomas Hayes, Clerk to the Governors.

The funeral service was held at the Church of St. Bartholomew's-the-Less, which is within the hospital gates.

Canon E. F. Donne officiated, assisted by the Rev. J. L. Douglas, and a large congregation were present including the Matron and members of the nursing staff of the hospital.

Mrs. Hayes was Lady Superintendent of the Children's Hospital, Shadwell, when she met Mr. Hayes, also an official of the hospital. After many years of happy marriage the sympathy of the nursing profession is offered to Mr. Hayes for the loss of his devoted wife.

* Faber and Faber, Ltd., 24, Russell Square, W.C.1. 6s. net.

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