

PROFESSIONAL REVIEW.

OPERATING ROOM PROCEDURE FOR NURSES.*

A most useful and handy book recently published is "Operating Room Procedures for Nurses," by Miss Jean D. Jolly, S.R.N., S.C.M., Sister Tutor, Stobhill General Hospital, Glasgow, formerly Theatre Supervisor; Examiner for the General Nursing Council, Scotland.

It is small enough to be conveniently included in the limited luggage of the private nurse, and should be of great assistance to her; it is clearly written and printed, and has numerous excellent illustrations. A nurse who assimilates its teaching will be well prepared to face her examiner on these subjects, and to prepare efficiently for any operation with which she may be called upon to deal.

In his foreword Dr. James Adam, M.A., writes: "The development of modern surgery is proceeding both extensively and intensively, and in both respects rapidly. It becomes therefore increasingly difficult for a nurse to keep abreast of the tide in her time.

"This book will prove a real help and will commend itself both to those who know and to those who do not know, for its author has had quite unusual experience in the technique of a surgical theatre, not only as regards general surgery but also in respect of its special branches."

The author, in her introduction, points out that the aim of these lectures is to try to make the nurse familiar with the general principles of operating room procedures. The methods used should aim at simplicity, and in turn this will imply economy in supplies, time, and the number of assistants required. The aim is to get the patient well with as little loss of time as possible, and whatever method contributes to this end should be adopted.

"Good operating technique is not measured by the number of assistants present in the operating room, any more than asepsis by the pile of soiled linen. It is more than half true that the more skilled the surgeon the fewer the appliances and instruments required.

"Above all things, a theatre nurse must be conscientious; the conscientiousness of the theatre nurse regarding asepsis is almost as important in saving the patient's life as the skill of the surgeon.

"The nurse must have a thorough knowledge of elementary bacteriology before she will understand theatre or surgical ward work, because the presence of those minute organisms which cause the damage should be ever before her."

We entirely agree with the author. No nurse who is not entirely conscientious is fit to undertake the duty of caring for the sick either for medical or surgical cases. Human life is of too much importance to be at the mercy of unconscientious women, who should not dare to presume to undertake this work. The duties now entrusted to nurses are so important and critical that a precious life may easily be lost, and a surgeon's skilled work rendered of no avail by some careless or unconscientious action on the part of a nurse.

The first chapter deals with "A Good Operating Theatre," describing in detail its fittings and arrangements. It also gives the preparations for "Operations in Private Houses" prefacing these with the statement that "an operation in a private house is undesirable and rarely unavoidable nowadays."

The next section deals with the "special points for a theatre nurse to remember," giving the very necessary injunction, "anticipate what is required," and again, "a nurse who has any septic lesion should not report for theatre duties, as this may endanger the patient's life."

In regard to surgical lotions, we read "it is not good technique or treatment to use too freely antiseptic lotions for an aseptic area or in the treatment of wounds, as they tend to lower the resisting power of the tissues, and interfere with the work of the phagocytes; therefore, if instruments or hands are placed in an antiseptic solution during an operation, they should be rinsed in saline or sterile water before coming in contact with the tissues."

Concerning blood transfusion we read that this is carried out so frequently that it is necessary for the nurse to be familiar with its technique. "Excellent results are obtained in cases of hæmorrhage during operations, secondary hæmorrhage, pernicious anæmia and secondary anæmia due to prolonged septic absorption. In the last case it is usual to withdraw a certain amount of the toxic blood before transfusing fresh blood.

"Before every transfusion the blood must be tested and grouped to determine whether the donor's blood is free from such diseases as malaria or syphilis and whether it is compatible with that of the recipient." The two methods, the direct and the indirect or citrated method, are then described.

A chapter is devoted to anaesthetics, their administration and apparatus. Chloroform, it is stated, is an efficient anaesthetic, but very dangerous, and as time goes on is being much less used. The various stages are described, the third stage, the ideal stage of anaesthesia, being where the muscles are completely relaxed, all reflexes abolished, pupils contracted, breathing regular and colour good. "The next stage may happen very suddenly, and is the dangerous stage. The pupils dilate, breathing becomes stertorous and stops; the pulse is soft, becoming imperceptible, colour pallid—this may happen in a few seconds and the patient die. The nurse *must be ready to assist* the anaesthetist with hot fomentations to apply over the cardiac region. She must have a hypodermic syringe ready and may be ordered to give such drugs as strychnine, coramine, pituitrin or camphor in oil. . . . She must be very alert, but *must keep cool* and have everything required ready."

A necessary word of warning is given that until he regains consciousness a patient must never be left alone.

The care of radium needles is described, and lastly a section is devoted to neuro-surgery. This very highly specialised branch of surgery has developed greatly in the last twenty years. Technique of neuro-surgical procedures, especially for intra-cranial operations has, it is stated, to be more nearly perfect than that employed in any other branch of surgery. This is readily understandable. We cordially recommend this book to the attention of our readers.

M. B.

A WORD FOR THE MONTH.

"England's Old Sweetheart."

Speaking at the Royal Empire Society's Dinner, the Lord Mayor of London said: "London expected so little, yet gave so much. Her heart was generous. She had beauty and dignity, peace and tranquillity to set off against the thunder of her transport, her dirt, her grime. She was London, whichever way it was—England's old sweetheart, loved by her sons for two thousand years. As the Mansion House was regarded as the centre of the corporate life of our capital, so the Royal Empire Society was becoming more and more to be looked upon as the centre of Empire and thought. The wonderful building of the Royal Empire Society would for the future make the visitor from Overseas, from the uttermost parts of the Empire, feel that as he entered all doors were open to him, all arms extended to him in welcome, and that there he might find friendship and help."

*Faber & Faber, 24, Russell Square, London, W.C.1. 3/6 net.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)