

THE NATIONAL CRISIS

The war is over, and with the cessation of hostilities, air raids and the visitation of "terrors which fly by day and night," what can we call this interlude which has taken its place? Not peace—surely! For want of a better name, we call it a National Crisis.

Somehow or other Nurses always appear to be living at a "crisis" level. Either their patients are critically ill—which for a span calls forth all their emergency knowledge and treatments and absorbs their whole attention—or the junior nurses go off duty with mumps or chicken pox, leaving a critical shortage of Nurses to cover a frantically busy ward. Else the daily woman does not come in and sends a note to say her knees are troubling her, and thus the Nurses are left to grapple with the sweeping and washing-up, in addition to coping with extra surgical emergencies.

Maybe also the chef or the cook are having tantrums in the kitchen, and the whole of the food service looks like breaking down, unless Nurses will "volunteer" to go into the kitchen and cook the food or peel the potatoes "just to help out." As there is a shortage of porters, Nurses must wheel their own patients to X-ray and give a hand in getting them onto the theatre trolleys and wheeling them to the theatre themselves.

Yes, Nurses meet crises every day and almost with monotonous regularity, so that this National Crisis is merely another one to take in their daily stride.

How will this crisis affect us in the nursing profession? A cut in our meagre rations is threatened. Nurses have no priority and thus they will have to carry out their arduous physical tasks on a less intake of energy and body-building materials. This hardship will not affect older nurses so seriously as it will affect the younger ones. Now Mr. Dalton's blessing, benevolent as it is, and most unexpected and staggering, will not supply the necessary calories required by Nurses to carry out their daily tasks. Can he supply them with anything likely to appease hunger pangs more efficaciously than by his non-episcopalian blessing?

Clothing coupons are to be in "short supply" over a longer period. Perhaps that won't affect the Nurses quite so badly, because they wear uniform for a long period of their earthly lives, which is coupon free. Still, their stockings wear out so quickly and their shoes get holes in them with such startling rapidity that one wonders if it might not be a good idea to copy the mediæval Franciscans or Discalced Carmelite Monks, and go barefooted or else press for exciting sandals made of nice soft leather, which leave bare toes and heels comfortably free!

"Ah," thinks one bright young thing, "I will go abroad for holidays and stock up my wardrobe and have a jolly good feed and then return home ready for anything!" Unfortunately for her, Mr. Hugh Dalton thought first, and this time—without his blessing, he arranged that only a small amount of petty cash should accompany hungry British travellers abroad looking for "extras." So the bright young thing must think again.

Once again our wily Chancellor has the answer to it. Nurses, like every one else must WORK! Yes—really work! Up to now Nurses haven't worked at all, they've only *thought* they did. So now, what about taking a plot of ground in one's off-duty time and growing one's own tomatoes, spinach, asparagus, grapes, and other luxuries, one has grown accustomed to having lately. On one's day off, why not "volunteer" to work in a mill or factory, or even down a coal mine? Perhaps Nurses sleep too long? Very well, cut down on sleep and volunteer for part-time

night work in the nearest Cottage Hospital or relieve the "hard-pressed" charwoman and clean the corridors and front steps. There is always MORE WORK to be done if one looks hard enough for it.

You'll probably earn more money by undertaking these little extra jobs—perhaps you won't be quite sure what to do with it. Leave it to Mr. Dalton—God bless him—he'll tell you what to do! After deducting his share of Income Tax, you may buy War Savings or National Saving Certificates! Then, when you get older and the zest for living is departing and you no longer crave for silk undies, nylons, creams and chocolates and glamorous holidays, you will have plenty of money to buy all you require for your old age. Now isn't Mr. Dalton a pet to think all this out so nicely for us?

So now we realise that for the great boon of being born and bred British, we must pay for the privilege. We've won the war, we've weathered the bombs and blast and now we've to crack and crush the crisis. Is this too much for British Nurses to endure? No—no—a thousand times no—but let it be the last crisis, please! Some day—in the not too distant future—give us our perfumes and fine soaps, our stockings and shoes, our bright lights at night. Give us more Nurses to share our burdens, and send us good cooks and chars without pains, and then, Mr. Dalton, our work will be pleasure and you won't have to plead with us to either work or want. We'll work.

G.M.H.

REVIEW.

A GENERAL COURSE IN HYGIENE*

By A. E. Ikin, LL.D. (Lond.) B.Sc. (formerly Director of Education, Blackpool), and G. E. Gates, M.D., M.R.C.P. Lond., D.P.H. (Camb.) (Medical Officer of Health to the Metropolitan Borough of Paddington).

According to the Preface to the Second Edition of this textbook, the volume "is designed as a course of instruction for those who have already an elementary knowledge of hygiene, as well as some grounding in simple chemistry and physics." Included in it are most matters comprised in the Syllabuses of the University of Cambridge School Certificate and many other public examinations. What will interest Nurses, however, is that all subjects included in the Syllabus of Hygiene for State Registration are also clearly explained and they are most instructive.

Of very particular interest is the chapter on foods and diets and vitamins. Milk as a subject has been dealt with most comprehensively and Student Nurses need to know all they can possibly learn about this important food. There is also a good deal of information about tea, coffee, cocoa and alcoholic beverages, which is extremely interesting and not usually to be found within the pages of a textbook on Hygiene.

The chapter on personal hygiene will be of the greatest use to Student Nurses. One little paragraph on tobacco is invaluable and we are very pleased to see that such eminent authors state quite clearly and dogmatically that the practice of smoking in young girls and boys is injurious and should be strictly prohibited.

Indeed, the whole book is a mine of information for any type of students of Hygiene and it cannot be too highly recommended. No such complete compendium was written for us when we were training, which was our sad loss. Present-day Nurses are to be envied that such a valuable book is written for them in their Student days.

*University Tutorial Press, Clifton House, Euston Road N.W.1.

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