

time being, as to answering bells, removing trays, and what not, is something in the domestic entourage which has to be handled with as much caution as a stick of dynamite. How long will she stay in a household if she jars on the patient, interprets the courtesy of the family toward her as a license to consider herself as a member of the household, and join in familiarly in matters not pertaining to her patient? And when next, if you please, will she hear from that doctor, when he is asked if it would not be a good idea to have the baby see Dr. X whom the nurse considers quite wonderful, or take this medicine which the nurse considers very splendid in these particular cases? Like the maid servants, the doctors have their little weaknesses. I once heard it cynically expressed that if you want to please him, feed the brute. The nurse who knows her doctor, knows how to please him without feeding. She knows how to make her little suggestions, give him the little inside facts, bring out her little hobbies, and gain all her little legitimate ends, and thus make him feel that she is a real and a valuable aid to him in trying situations.

She knows how to do all this when she has within her that pearl among the jewels—tact,—without it,—may her soul rest in peace.

## ETIOLOGY OF GONORRHOEA \*

By ALICE C. BEATLE, R.N.

Graduate of the Illinois Training School, Chicago

It is a note-worthy observation that gonorrhœa, which gives rise to the most grave of gynecologic diseases, was almost entirely neglected until recently, yet knowledge of the disease is said to be several thousand years old, dating back as far as the writings of Moses.

Gonorrhœa is an infectious, progressive, catarrhal disease of the mucous membrane, produced by the germ gonococcus, and it is said by some authorities to occasion pathological conditions and physical disturbances which surpass in seriousness any other condition which the gynecologists are called upon to treat.

The germ gonococcus was discovered in 1879 by Dr. Neisser, although the real significance of the disease, both medical and social, began to be recognized in 1872 with the publication of the views of Dr. Emil Noeygerath. Under the microscope the gonococcus is distinctly seen by

---

\* Read before the Alumnae Association of the Illinois Training School, Chicago, May, 1910.

staining. It is a relatively large micrococcus, appearing as a diplococcus. Each half of the diplococcus is kidney-shaped, the flat surfaces applied to each other.

As the gonococcus is difficult to cultivate on artificial media, human blood serum is the best, at body temperature, although it will withstand for a short time, higher or lower temperature.

The gonococcus is sensitive to a condition of dryness, after a few hours the germ grows sparingly and after twenty-four hours it will scarcely grow at all.

The extent of gonorrhœa is not limited to accessible mucous membrane, but it attacks serosa, synovia, endocardia, and connective tissue. The stage of incubation varies from two to fourteen days, the average being five days. The infection in women may travel from the vulva through the vagina to the cervix, and from there extend over the endometrium and through the oviduct to the peritoneum.

The method of acquiring gonorrhœa is, in the large majority of cases, from sexual intercourse. Since the gonococcus lives a considerable time in a moist state, the disease may be communicated by moist linen, which nurses are obliged to handle in homes and hospitals. Public toilets are also a source of danger. Dr. Robinson states that while he has not investigated gonorrhœa in relation to the mucous membrane of the mouth, yet he sees no reason why it may not occur in that locality. If this be true, then the public drinking cup, which has been so much discussed, should be considered more dangerous than ever. It is not necessary to state to an audience of nurses that the utmost care should be used in cleansing bed pans, douche pans, and bath tubs. If mothers are brought to realize the great danger which surrounds their sons and daughters, it will not be long until they will have joined forces to help exterminate the black plague as it has been termed.

Saddest of all, and the thing to be most deplored, is that the dread disease is making hundreds of wives childless, rendering them sterile, taking away from them the privileges of motherhood.

It is time the public was aware of the real significance of the disease when every year it renders hundreds of babies blind, and is taking away the rights of motherhood, for, as the Talmud most beautifully puts it, "God could not be everywhere so he made mothers."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In gathering material for this paper I have quoted largely from Dr. Byron Robinson.