

**DRESSINGS.**

The Englishman sterilizes his dressings by the aid of carbolic acid, corrosive sublimate or other antiseptic solution, with subsequent wringing out in weaker solutions or sterile water before application; but as the oozing from the wound precipitates the chemicals the *dry* dressings sold by the manufacturers in containers of guaranteed sterility are a great humbug, in spite of the well-meant efforts of the manufacturing house to make them reliable: more especially as dressings, sterilized by chemicals, are reliable only when they are conveyed directly from the antiseptic fluid to the wound.

The German places his dressings, already thoroughly cleansed by washing and drying, in a steam sterilizer, so built that the steam extending from above and escaping below expels all air, and at the same time permeates every particle of the articles placed in it. The whole process takes 30 minutes and the dressings are conveyed directly from the sterilizer to the wound.

To keep sterilized dressings for use all the time, BLOCH'S method is the most practical and the simplest. The gauze wrapped up in a double layer of filtering paper (readily penetrable by steam, which ordinary paper is not) is tied, marked and put into the sterilizer where it is thoroughly steamed and afterwards perfectly dried. And so long as the covering of filtering paper remains dry the contents of such packages will remain sterile. Any one can unroll the outer layer, and the surgeon picks out the inner which contains the gauze, ready for use.

The French system of Autoclave (*i.e.*, high-pressure steam) sterilization would be the acme of perfection, were it not that besides being expensive and cumbersome the autoclaves are stationary apparatus that answer admirably for large hospital practice; but do not give the dry dressings that can be obtained in sterilizers made after the German principle.

**SUTURES AND LIGATURES.**

Are of various materials, but as examples of in-absorbable and absorbable suturing and ligating materials we shall take silk and catgut.

*Silk* being capable of remaining for almost any length of time in strong antiseptic solutions of repeated boilings without detriment, the English school allows it to soak for a few days in 1 in 20 carbolic acid solution, while the German sterilizes it by steam or by boiling; but the Frenchman who is just as extravagant in his treatment of silk as in his sterilization of all other articles, boils his silk first in filtered water, then antiseptic solutions, and finally steams it in the autoclave.

*Catgut* can neither be boiled nor steamed though it can be submitted to gradually raised *dry* heat of 280°F.

**The Colonial Nursing Association.**

THE Annual Meeting of the Colonial Nursing Association took place at the Imperial Institute last week. The Patroness of the Association, Princess Henry of Battenberg was present, The President, the Right Hon. Lord Loch, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., took the chair, and there were present: Mrs. Francis T. Piggott, Founder and Hon. Secretary of the Association; Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain, Miss Mary Kingsley of West African fame, Lady Alison, Mrs. Edward Wingfield, Lady Musgrave, Mr. and Mrs. Fred. Dutton, General and Mrs. Robinson, and other ladies and gentlemen interested in the Society.

After very briefly opening the meeting, Lord Loch called upon Mrs. Piggott to read the Report, which she did, presenting a clear and concise statement of the work of the Association. The Association owes its inception to the fact that Mrs. Piggott, when living in Mauritius, was so concerned at the loss of life, and at the suffering amongst Europeans, owing to the lack of nurses, that she was not content until she had sought for and found a remedy. It is natural, therefore, that Mauritius should be the first colony to benefit by the work of the Association. Many other colonies, however, have also been assisted, including the Straits Settlements, the West Coast of Africa—more especially the Gold Coast, the Malay States, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Cyprus, Trinidad, Selangor, and the Bahamas. If there was any part of the world which was particularly unhealthy, the Association aimed at supplying this with nurses, and Mrs. Piggott asserted, that the keenest competition was always felt amongst the nurses as to which of them should go to the most unhealthy climates. The work they had done was invaluable, and without the skilled aid which they had afforded, probably many more deaths would have occurred. With regard to the funds of the Association, nearly all the places to which nurses were sent, refunded expenses. Mauritius to which the Association guaranteed £50 a year, never having asked for it for the last three years, but still, they required a definite income if the utmost good was to be effected, and another £100 a year was required. In July, 1896 the Association obtained the support of the Secretary of State, and an official despatch was sent from Mr. Chamberlain to the Crown Colonies asking them to support the Association. Its objects were:—

(1.) The assistance of those places where the residents cannot bear all the expense of a trained nurse, where possible the nurse being attached to, and working from, the Government Hospital.

(2.) To assist financially the poorer colonies. The Association was hopeful that in the future the organization of no hospital in a Crown Colony should

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