

Practical Points.

Hypodermic Medication in Sterilised Phials.

Writing in the *American Journal of Nursing*, Miss L. L. Dock says:—It may be that our hospitals at home have begun to use the sterilised phial medicaments for hypodermic injections, but, if not, I should like to describe this method, which was new to me, and which seems to have many advantages over the tablets and other preparations for giving drugs hypodermically from the standpoint of surgical technique and asepsis. Details of technique must always interest the nurse, who is held responsible for many results. The Italian physicians in their practice and in hospital work use these phials entirely, and it was in Italy that I saw them. The phials are very delicate little glass things, each holding just one dose of a given drug in solution, the strength being, of course, always designated. They have a long, delicate neck just a little larger than the hypodermic needle. They are filled in the manufactory under aseptic precautions, and then the opening of the tiny flask is hermetically sealed. When a hypodermic injection is to be given this seal is broken off, and the needle, which has been sterilised and placed in position on the syringe, is inserted directly into the long neck, the phial being held in an inclined position. The piston is then drawn and the syringe filled. It will be readily seen that perfect asepsis is obtained in this way. The phials and contents are prepared by an Italian firm in Florence, and besides the usual drugs Italian physicians always order various drugs in this way which we are not usually accustomed to give hypodermically, such as preparations of iron, guaiacol, hypophosphites, &c. I went into Parke, Davis and Co.'s drug shop in Florence and asked them if they sent many of these phials to America. They said they did send a good many to private physicians, but not to hospitals. It is possible they may be quite expensive, but even then I recommend them to the notice of our hospital superintendents.

Miss A. Turton, Lady Superintendent of the Villa Regina Natalia, at Florence, writes:—

"I see in the February number of the *American Journal of Nursing*, a notice on our hypodermic phials by Miss L. L. Dock. She has described all the advantages of this system of preparation; its absolute asepsis, non-alterability, and certain administering of right quantity, since the neck of each phial of thin glass is closed hermetically by heat, and contains only a trifle over the exact quantity ordered for each injection (allowing for a little being lost). Each phial has a label with quantity and quality of medicine, so that the nurse can see at a glance what she is going to administer. The firm most known for the preparation of these phials is that of Molteni, Piazza Signoria, Firenze. They send over all Italy, and to England or America, to any doctor or patient who has learnt to know and appreciate them. To the Casa di Cura and other hospitals they allow a discount of 30 per cent., and would make the same concession to any English nursing home or hospital.

"Miss Dock remarks on the large variety of drugs given hypodermically in Italy. We constantly put patients through courses of arsenic and iron, or iron and strychnine, for anemia; of guaiacol, for tubercu-

losis; and use digitalis, sparteina, camphor, caffeine for heart affections—all with the best results, and with no fear of 'hypodermic abscesses.'

"The advantages claimed for administering drugs by the circulation instead of through the digestive track are those of more rapid and thorough assimilation and avoidance of gastric disturbance.

"I enclose a list of the drugs kept in stock in sterilised phials by Messrs. Molteni e Cie., and of the moderate price at which they are supplied.

"In cases where the doctor orders sterilised water, they will prepare phials even of that, facilitating the nurse's act of deception."

The Practical Application of Electricity.

At the annual meeting of the American Society of Superintendents of Training-Schools held at Pittsburg, U.S.A., the exhibition of appliances was extremely instructive especially those heated by electricity.

The Croup Kettle.

The croup kettle, which used to be such a source of anxiety to the nurse because it must stand over an alcohol or gas flame close to the bed, is now robbed of its danger, for it is kept hot on a small electric stove. Stuping flannels or any hot application can be kept at the desired temperature at the bedside of the patient by means of the same apparatus. An instrument and water steriliser heated by electricity has been used very successfully in the wards. The blankets and gowns used for the patients in the operating-room are kept in a cupboard which has an electric coil under the shelf so that they may be always warm and ready for use.

The Towel Heater.

A very convenient arrangement for heating towels during an operation has been introduced into the operating-room. The towels, wrung out of sterile water or bichloride solution, are placed in a basin having a perforated bottom. This fits closely over another basin filled with sterile water and the whole stands on an electric stove. The steam passing through the perforations in the upper basin keeps the towels or abdominal pads hot, so that they are always ready when called for by the surgeon.

The Fate of Unabsorbable Buried Ligatures.

The *International Journal of Surgery* ascribes as a reason for unabsorbable buried ligatures working their way to the surface after a lapse of months or years the fact that these ligatures were not strictly aseptic when introduced into the tissues. Dr. C. Hamilton Whiteford, in the *British Medical Journal*, believes that these ligatures may become infected from bacteria contained in the blood current. The *International Journal of Surgery* maintains that the frequency of after trouble from unabsorbed ligatures and the ever present possibility of this occurring, is sufficient reason for eliminating non-absorbable buried ligatures from surgical technic. Catgut prepared so as to resist rapid absorption possesses all the advantages of the unabsorbable ligatures without the disadvantages of the latter.

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