

Practical Points.

A Pulse Register.

Dr. Gartner, of Vienna, has invented an apparatus called a "pulse register," intended to watch and register the action of the heart and pulse while the patient is under the influence of chloroform, cocaine, or ether. The apparatus consists of a watch-like box, to be attached to the patient's forearm. The box has a graduated dial and hands, working according to pulse and blood-pressure vibrations, which are registered by an elastic spring in the most precise manner imaginable. The physician in attendance, or operator, is all the time kept informed of the exact degree of the unconscious person's pulse and heartaction. The controller furthermore shows the action of pulses which the physician's finger cannot feel or find. Dr. Gartner says that he hopes patients and physicians alike will be benefited by his invention. "The patient may now submit to operations without haunting fear of going to sleep never to wake again. As to the doctors, they are rid of a great absorbing care, and can devote themselves more closely to their surgical work. Remember, operations sometimes last for hours; it puts an awful additional strain on the superintending physician to watch the pulse all the time. Many operators have told me that the constant watch tired their brains more than the case itself."

Ignition of Ether Vapour by an Electric Light.

Every surgeon thoroughly appreciates the danger of an open lamp anywhere near ether vapour, but it is generally supposed that an electric incandescent light is perfectly harmless. To be sure, accidents from this cause are extremely rare, but Dr. D. H. Murray (*New York Medical Journal*) reports an instance in which the ether vapour, about a cone by which a patient was being anaesthetised, was ignited when an electric light was turned on near by. The patient's hair was badly singed, but no serious injury resulted. As there was no exposed fire or blaze in the operating room at the time, it was concluded that the ignition resulted from the spark in the electric light, made when the contact took place in turning on the light. It is a possible danger worth remembering.

Sanatoria for the Poor.

The suggestion which has been brought before the Metropolitan Asylums Board for the conversion of some of the accommodation provided by the Board for the reception of small-pox patients into sanatoria for the consumptive merits very serious consideration. In the recent epidemic, the *Practitioner* says, it was found that more than enough space was provided for the needs of all the patients who had to be treated for small-pox, and it may safely be assumed that no risk would be run in converting some of the beds provided for small-pox convalescents to some other purpose. What more pressing need is there than that for sanatoria for the consumptive poor? At present there is practically no sanatorium accommodation for the poor; the cost of treatment is almost prohibitive for those of

limited means, and for those without means at all the chances of such treatment are almost *nil*. Now that the benefits to be derived from open-air treatment are well known, every effort ought to be made to bring this chance of respite within the reach of all sufferers. We are a long way behind Germany in this matter, and endeavour must be made to make up the ground that has been lost. The loss to the State through its weak and sickly members is enormous, and money spent on the cure of consumption will be money well laid out.

Stimulating the Secretion in Nursing Women.

The *Medical Record*, in a synopsis of an article from a German contemporary, says:—"Zlocisti points out the necessity of encouraging nursing instead of bottle-feeding, and reports the results he has had with a purified form of cotton-seed used as a galactagogue. The observations of dairymen have established the value of the oil-cake obtained as a by-product in the expression of the oil from cotton-seed as a means of increasing the milk output of dairies, and the author has employed a purified product deprived of its indigestible cellulose constituents for a similar purpose with nursing women. The results showed that the preparation was not found disagreeable to take by the women, and that it did not seem to cause any undesirable effects. In all of the twelve cases in which it was given it seemed to cause a very marked stimulation of the milk flow, which became apparent on the third or fourth day, when twenty-five to thirty grammes of the substance had been administered."

Insomnia.

Dr. Eliot Gorton read a paper on this subject before the Practitioners' Club of Newark, N.J. He classifies the treatment under three heads—dietetic, hygienic, and medical. He advises regulating the bowels and giving a light, nourishing diet. A warm, full bath, just before going to bed, followed by a hot drink, preferably of milk, and, if necessary, a moderate hypnotic, is effective. The face should be bathed with cold water, and the head above the eyes be wrapped in a cold, wet towel during the bath, which should be kept at 98° and last from fifteen to twenty-five minutes. The cold wet-pack and warm sitz baths may also be tried. Hot foot-baths are highly recommended, and should be continued until the feet are intensely red. He considers paraldehyde the safest hypnotic, and the best form paraldehyde two parts, whisky one part, syrup of orange one part. This disguises the pungent odour and taste. The mixture must be well shaken before giving it. Opium and its alkaloids should not be given for insomnia. Small doses stimulate and excite the nervous system, producing a condition of wakefulness in the majority of cases, while larger doses present disagreeable after-effects. The results from its use are often more difficult to deal with than the affection itself. In insomnia from excessive mental or physical fatigue he recommends a mild stimulant, as strychnia or a glass of ale or porter. Hot milk or malted milk is also of great service. He entirely excludes tea and coffee from the diet-list, and cocoa and chocolate in most cases.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)