

dred Nurses who are working on the co-operative principle and receiving their own fees, each patient is, for the time being, the Nurse's employer in the eyes of the law, and is, therefore, for the time being, saddled with all the liabilities under the new Act for any accident which may happen to the Nurse. We propose, next week, to point out some of the effects which may thus ensue, and how they should be dealt with.

Medical Matters.

WOUNDS OF THE HEART.



A valuable paper by M. Quénu, summarised in the *British Medical Journal*, deals with the modern treatment of wounds of the heart. The author describes a case of successful suturing of a penetrating wound in the right cardiac ventricle, and discusses some points of interest in regard, to the latest experiences in the surgical treatment of this injury. He alludes in the first place to the increasing number of good results from such treatment, and points out that the surgeon can no longer confirm the statement made by Legouest that a case of wound of the heart has almost always a fatal ending. Exception being made of those cases in which great loss of blood renders the prognosis very unfavourable, the primary danger in an operation on a wounded heart is hæmorrhage into the pleural cavity, and the chief secondary danger, pleural infection. The latter has frequently occurred in successful as well as in fatal cases, the infection, though sometimes set up by the wounding instrument, being in most instances the result of the necessity for hasty and irregular intervention. Later statistics, Quénu states, have modified the impression that wounds of the left ventricle are more dangerous than those of the right side of the heart, but the number of observations is at present too small to permit an exact conclusion on this point. Quénu states that the immediate danger of a penetrating wound consists not only in hæmorrhage causing either sudden emptying of the organ by a free flow of blood through a large opening but in arrest of the heart's action by an accumulation of blood in the pericardial cavity. Kronecker and Schmey have, it is pointed out, directed attention to the existence of a co-ordinating nerve centre of the cardiac movements, situated in the anterior interventricular

furrow at the junction of the lower and the middle thirds. The conclusions of these observers have not been confirmed by later researches, but clinical facts in Quénu's opinion show that an injury of the heart is capable of producing, quite independently of hæmorrhage or compression, grave disturbance of the cardiac function, which may extend to complete cessation of the beating of the organ. In an instance of this kind the muscular contractions may be revived by cardiac massage. A case is reported, however, in which after failure to restore the action of a wounded heart by massage, success, though only temporary, followed an intracardiac injection of physiological serum, in accordance with the opinion held by Taffe that so long as the inactive heart is capable of being restored to life, an injection of serum into the left ventricle will suffice to set up muscular contraction. A case is referred to, which indicates that in the intracardiac injection of serum we have an additional means of reanimating the ceased cardiac pulsations. It is very probable, however, that stimulation of the endocardium is capable of causing inhibition as well as excitation. In the case quoted by the author, permanent cessation of the cardiac movements was almost immediately preceded by an injection of serum which had not been warmed. It is very necessary, he states, to take care that the injected serum be at a temperature of 38° C., so as not to differ in this respect from the blood, which, according to Barnard, has a temperature of 38·8° C. in the left cavities, and that of 38·6° C. in the right cavities of the heart.

PATENT MEDICINES.

Interesting analyses of some well advertised obesity cures were given last week in a medical journal. It is hopeless to expect that the public, who dearly love a quack, will be led by these revelations to eschew patent medicines in future, but it will interest nurses to know that, according to our contemporary, Antipon, which sells at 2s. 6d. a bottle, holding about 6½ ounces, or 13 doses, is composed of a strong solution of citric acid, with some colouring matter like cochineal, and the estimated cost of the ingredients in each half-crown bottle is three halfpence! Russell's Anti-Corpulent Preparation was found to consist of a solution of citric acid with citrate of iron and ammonium, and the cost of the ingredients of a bottle which is priced at 6s. is estimated at just over 2d.! The Y.Z. Obesity Tablets were found to consist of sulphur, ginger, sugar, and gum, and the contents of a box, which costs two shillings could be made for exactly one halfpenny!

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