

Medical Matters.

MEDICAL DEFENCE.



There is considerable disappointment felt in medical quarters that the Medical Defence Union and the London and Counties' Protection Society have not arrived at an understanding to amalgamate. The former is the older of the two, but it has had a very chequered career and was so largely looked upon as a provincial body that medical men in London and elsewhere hesitated to join its ranks, and an unfortunate series of events, which occurred last year, tended still further to alienate sympathy from its methods of management. On the other hand, the younger Society has rapidly grown in numbers and professional approval, and, during its short existence, it has, undoubtedly, rendered yeoman service. The proposal for amalgamation, therefore, manifestly wise in itself because it would conduce both to economy and efficiency in the management, appears, after prolonged negotiations, to have fallen through, for reasons which clearly lie below the surface, and which, it may be conjectured, are not entirely devoid of personal feeling. Still, the matter is too important to be permitted to rest here; the question of the defence of medical men against the many false charges which are trumped up against them, especially in rural districts, is too serious to the profession individually, as well as collectively, for any petty reasons to be allowed to interfere with the formation of a powerful Society for their protection. It is, therefore, earnestly hoped that some *modus vivendi* may be found, and that, in due course, all the difficulties which, at present, seem to obstruct amalgamation may be smoothed away so that so desirable a consummation may be speedily obtained.

SUDDEN DEATH FROM HÆMORRHAGE INTO THE PERICARDIUM.

Dr. Fraser, of Hull, reports two cases of this somewhat rare accident, and it is a curious coincidence that he was called upon to make the two post-mortems within two days. In the first case, there had been an abscess in the wall of the heart opening into the ventricle and finally bursting into the pericardium, with the result that the man fell

down and died within a few minutes. The second patient was a fisherman who expired suddenly at sea, and, in this instance, a small aneurism in the wall of the left ventricle was found to have ruptured into the pericardium. Common as broken hearts are in novels and poetic effusions of the melancholic order, they are sufficiently rare in practice to excite interest, and to demand, as in the above cases they received, very careful examination.

PUERPERAL SEPTICÆMIA.

An active discussion on this subject is going on in the columns of a medical contemporary, with the customary differences of opinion on points of theory. But as to the practical facts, of course, there is no dispute, and instances are quoted which are of much interest and importance to Nurses. For example, there can be no question that after even a straightforward and ordinary labour, the patient is, in a most marked degree, susceptible to external influences, to the contagion of zymotic diseases, and that the probability of blood poisoning—to use the popular term—is greatly enhanced if there has been any laceration of the cervix uteri, of the vagina, or of the perineum, caused either by the passage of the child, or by the use of forceps or other instruments. It is, therefore, on the face of it, probable that insanitary conditions of the patient's house, the entrance of effluvia from the drains, and so forth, which are admittedly causes of sore throats and other septic affections to persons in good health, are potent sources of danger in the puerperal state. Practically this has been conceded because the immense effect of the use of antiseptics in reducing the death rate amongst parturient women is universally admitted. An example is given of a Nurse who pricked her finger while attending on a case of puerperal septi-cæmia, and whose hand and arm rapidly became so affected that amputation had to be performed at the shoulder joint. The practical lessons of the discussion, so far as Nurses are concerned, are the cardinal necessity for cleanliness, and for the removal of any insanitary conditions affecting the bedroom of the patient; for the use of antiseptics so far as the patient is concerned, and for the greatest carefulness in the avoidance of any scratch, prick, or infection, of her hands on the part of the Nurse.

AN EXCELLENT CHRISTMAS PLUM PUDDING.—Take three-quarters of a pound of flour, two ounces of Borwick's Gold Medal Baking Powder, two ounces of bread crumbs, one and a half pounds of suet, two pounds of raisins, one pound of currants, ten ounces of sugar, two ounces of almonds, one pound of mixed candied peel, salt and spice to taste, mix ingredients well together, and add six eggs well beaten, and three-quarters of a pint of milk, divide in two and boil eight hours. This receipt is unequalled.

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