

Findings from a Nurse's Notebook.

POISON.

"ANY substance which otherwise than by the agency of heat or electricity is capable of destroying life, either by chemical action on the tissues of the living body, or by physiological action by absorption into the living system."

POTT'S FRACTURE.

Fracture of the fibula two inches above the ankle joint, and of the internal lateral ligament of the ankle joint or the tip of the internal malleolus.

FRACTURES.

There are many varieties of fracture:—

Simple, Compound, Comminuted, Multiple, Greenstick, Impacted, Fissured and Depressed. In a compound fracture there is a wound through the skin and soft parts leading to the seat of fracture. Depressed fractures occur usually in injuries to the skull.

Signs of Fracture of Limb.—(1) Alteration in shape; (2) Swelling; (3) Loss of function; (4) Preternatural mobility; (5) Shortening; (6) Pain; (7) Crepitus; (8) Sensation of snapping experienced by the patient.

Fractures of the bones of the face are nearly always compound.

The clavicle is more often broken than any other bone in the body except the radius. Fracture of the scapula is very rare. The humerus is the bone which most commonly fails to unite.

DISLOCATIONS.

In dislocations, the ligatures of the joint are always ruptured. Dislocations may be *simple* or *compound*. *Spontaneous* (as in yawning), *pathological* (from disease) or *congenital*. They are termed *complete* when the head of the bone is forced out of the socket; *incomplete*, when it is only partially out. Incomplete dislocations occur most frequently in hinge joints. More than half of the dislocations which take place occur at the shoulder joint.

Signs of Dislocation.—Change in shape of joint. Impaired movement. Pain. It is important that a dislocation should be reduced as soon as possible, or adhesions may occur and unite the bone in a wrong position. When a dislocation has once taken place it is very apt to recur. Dislocations are reduced (1) by manipulation; (2) by traction.

SPLINTS.

The objects in applying splints are:—

- (1) To prevent movement.
- (2) To secure perfect rest to the injured part.
- (3) To remedy faulty union.

Splints should be wider than the limb to which they are applied. Those for the leg and

forearm should extend above and below the joints of the limbs. The padding of splints must be of uniform thickness. If there is unequal pressure anywhere, sores will probably be the result. Pads are best made of horsehair or tow covered with linen. A layer of cotton wool should be placed between the tow and the linen to prevent the tow working through. Pads should extend beyond the ends and the sides of the splints to be covered.

In cases of compound fracture the splints must be so adjusted that the wounds can be readily dressed. It should always be remembered that the plaster by which a splint is attached to a limb should start in the first instance from the splint, never from the limb.

LEECHES.

Leeches which are to be used should be frisky and lively in water. The part to which they are applied must be thoroughly washed with soap and water. It is sometimes recommended that it should be further smeared with milk, but if it is *clean* there is usually no difficulty in persuading the leeches to bite. They are best applied in small tubes specially sold for the purpose, but test tubes with a little absorbent wool at the bottom answer very well. When once they have begun to bite they should never be disturbed, but allowed to fall off. A little salt may be used if necessary, but if a leech be forcibly removed it will probably leave some of its teeth behind, and serious bleeding may ensue.

It must be remembered that there is a peculiarity about the bite of a leech, inasmuch as coagulation of the blood is prevented. Each leech sucks from one to two drachms of blood.

Hot water bathing keeps up the bleeding. It may be stopped with absorbent wool, or by pressure, cold compresses, ice. Styptics should not be used without medical orders.

After leeches have been applied a nurse should always watch for bleeding, especially at night.

An Undisciplined Patient.

It is generally conceded that "they do things differently in the United States." But it is doubtful whether the Hospital patients in that country are always so difficult to please as a gentleman "from the Rockies" who was recently in a London Hospital. He demanded cigars and whisky, and as the Nurse declined the responsibility of supplying these he announced that he would not "be a slave," and departed for some region of the free, where invalids might indulge in unlimited cocktails and tobacco.

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