

piece of lint soaked in such a solution and covered by oiled silk or mackintosh can be applied, so as to complete the cleansing process; or, failing such drugs, ordinary bread poultices, applied as hot as possible and frequently changed, will to a less extent attain the same end. Meanwhile, as a general rule, stimulants should be freely administered; sal-volatile, brandy, and other alcoholics being valuable in sustaining the heart's action, and preventing or alleviating the shock, or nerve depression, which is usually so profound in these cases. The condition of the hand in the case supposed will be of course carefully watched, and if the pressure on the blood vessels appeared to be causing dangerous symptoms, the ligature would doubtless be loosened as speedily as was consistent with safety. In the case of bites from reptiles which are not fatal, it is usually sufficient to make the incision described so as to encourage bleeding, and to apply a poultice, only keeping on the ligature for about half an hour, but giving stimulants freely. In some parts of South America, colonists find it necessary to apply ammonia to the bites of spiders, tarantulas, and other insects, as these also exhibit poisonous characteristics, and the application certainly affords a rapid relief to the pain which they occasion.

ARISTOL.

It is reported in a German contemporary that this drug exhibits a property which renders it valuable in all cases in which it is desired to prevent the rapid union of wounds; for example, the formation of adhesions in the abdominal cavity after an operation. It is stated that when the powder is dusted over a wound, a protective film is formed under which healing takes place quickly, but which prevents the wound from becoming united to any other raw surface against which it may be brought. In many surgical operations it is of the utmost consequence to achieve this result, and the effects of Aristol in this direction are therefore sure to be tested very carefully in this country, during the coming winter.

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A Guarantee of Purity.

The Nursing Examination of the Medico-Psychological Association of Great Britain and Ireland.

WE are devoting considerable space in this issue to reprinting letters, which have been published in contemporary journals, upon the above subject, as they prove, in our opinion, more conclusively than anything else which has yet been said, the justice, as well as the wisdom, of the action taken by certain members of the Royal British Nurses' Association. It will be remembered, that last January a public meeting was convened, to express the disapproval of many members of this Association at the attempt which was then, and we have reason to believe is still, being made, by the honorary officers of the Royal British Nurses' Association, to depreciate the professional status of the members by admitting on to the register of *trained nurses* asylum attendants, who have not received general hospital training. It was urged by the promoters of this ill-advised and retrograde measure, that the possession of the certificate of the Medico-Psychological Association was a guarantee of the efficiency of those so certificated. It was further urged that the value of this certificate was even greater than that given by hospitals, inasmuch as the examination was conducted by an independent body. The letters which we now publish are, therefore, especially significant, and point, we think, conclusively to one of two things. Either that those who hold those views are culpably ignorant of the value of the certificate which they vaunt, or, knowing its value, they are yet determined, for purposes of their own, to thrust upon the public, as trained nurses, persons who have no right to the name. We quote the following letter from the *British Medical Journal*:—

"Sir,—In reading asylum reports for the past year, one is struck by the number of candidates who are said to have passed the above examination, and by the remarks attesting to the enormous value such an examination has in perfecting the nursing of the insane. Of late it has become the common practice of asylum medical officers to declare the superiority of the holders of certificates for the above examination over trained hospital nurses, as they have, in addition to ordinary sick nursing, experience in nursing the insane; and it is only just, that medical men generally, should know what is the real value of the certificate awarded for the above examination. First, as regards the class of candidates, the great majority of asylum nurses are drawn from the ranks of domestic servants, and although most of them have had a fair elementary education, yet, even in these days, a large proportion of them can only write and spell imperfectly. So much for the raw material. As regards the course of study, there is a book called "Handbook for Attendants on the Insane"; it consists of 117 pages, and is the joint effort of eleven alienists. The contents of this book are required to be mastered in two years, with the aid of lectures by the medical staff of asylums.

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