

put to bed, care being taken that the bed has previously been warmed by hot-water bottles. A great deal will now depend upon the careful nursing of the case. The margins of the wound must be kept scrupulously clean, and the tube clean and unobstructed. The inner tube must be removed as often as necessary, and thoroughly cleansed before it is replaced. A solution of bicarbonate of soda will be found effective for this purpose, and the tube afterwards sterilised.

When the outer tube is removed two persons should always be present, as one will be required to keep the wound open with the dilators. The adjustment of the tapes which keep the tube in place is important. If too tight they will cause the throat to swell; if too loose, there is danger of the tube being coughed out. A diphtheritic patient should never be allowed to sit up in bed unless medical sanction has been obtained. The heart is often affected; the diphtheritic poison has a toxic effect upon the nerve centres, and sudden death may follow any infringement of this rule.

Any piece of membrane coughed up by the patient must be kept in a strong solution of carbolic or perchloride of mercury for the inspection of the medical attendant, and afterwards burnt.

A specimen of the urine should also be put up daily, as albumen is almost always present. A nurse must be careful of her own health when nursing a case of this nature. She should take a daily walk, and should carefully wash and disinfect her hands before taking her meals, which she should have out of the patient's room. She may also with advantage use a gargle daily. She must be careful that the patient does not cough into her face or eyes. Any scratch or crack on her fingers should be carefully covered with plaster.

It is often necessary to feed a tracheotomy case by the nostril. A large towel or a sheet should be tucked round the child so as to prevent any clutching at the tube. A soft, well-oiled catheter to which a glass funnel is attached must then be passed by way of the nostril over the roof of the mouth and down the œsophagus. No force must be used, and if the operation causes much coughing the tube should be withdrawn and a second attempt made. The tube must then be pinched, close to the nostril, to prevent the entrance of air, and the quantity of milk or other food ordered, warmed to about 98° Fahr., should be poured into the funnel and allowed to pass slowly down the tube. Sometimes a child is frightened and struggles, but, if skilfully performed, the process generally is less tiresome to the patient than that of slowly swallowing food by mouth. At the conclusion of a case of diphtheria, the room, and everything in it must be thoroughly disinfected and the nurse must go into quarantine until the incubating period of the disease is over.

Legal Matters.

A TELEGRAPH COMPANY'S RESPONSIBILITY.

The Supreme Court of Nebraska has confirmed a judgment, in the case of *Church v. Western Union Telegraph Company*, for 960 dols. damages against the company for failure to deliver promptly a telegram addressed to a physician saying "Come to L. C. Church's at once.—L. C. Church." An arrangement had been made with the physician to attend a confinement case, and he started immediately upon the receipt of the telegram, but did not arrive until after the birth of the child, a "foot presentation," during which the child died. The message was delivered to the company for transmission about 6 p.m. and was delivered about 9 p.m. On behalf of the plaintiff it was urged that the labour was prolonged owing to the failure of the physician to attend, and that the party suing was entitled to substantial rather than nominal damages.

The *Lancet* is of opinion that the verdict was not excessive, and says: "That great pain and agony ordinarily accompany childbirth, even in cases where sympathetic and competent persons are in attendance to render all assistance lying within human power, is a matter of common information. It may be said that this pain and agony are such that no person could negligently be the occasion of its prolongation without being culpable."

COURT-MARTIALLED.

Sick Bay Steward Butson, of the Royal Naval Hospital, Plymouth, has been sentenced by court-martial to eighteen months' imprisonment and to be dismissed from His Majesty's Service with disgrace for the fraudulent conversion of the moneys and effects of three patients.

The printed regulations of the hospital direct that all patients and officers should on admission hand over moneys and valuables for safe keeping by the cashier. The sick bay stewards in naval hospitals answer to the orderlies in army hospitals, and it is of great importance in both cases that only men of the highest character, and whose probity is beyond question, should be employed. We must point out, however, that in the present case the delinquent, having been dismissed from the Service, cannot again rob the sick in naval hospitals, whereas in civil life a man or woman convicted of a similar theft can, on coming out of jail, resume the calling which he or she has disgraced without let or hindrance, and will continue to do so until we have State Registration of Trained Nurses, and a body analogous to the General Medical Council which will not only deal with nursing education, but will have disciplinary powers enabling it to remove convicted criminals from the Register of Trained Nurses.

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