

Practical Points.

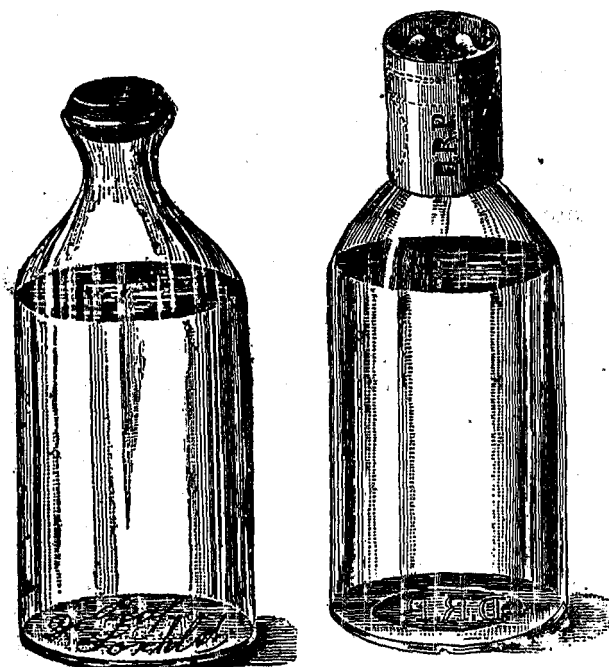
Surgical Substitutes.

The *American Journal of Surgery* says:—"A scroll saw, with an assortment of a dozen saws, can be purchased at the hardware store for twenty-five cents; it is ideal for resection of the small bones of the hand and foot, for amputations of the digits, &c. Well tempered carpenter's chisels and gouges and a carpenter's wooden mallet answer the purpose admirably for bone work. A useful bone drill can also be selected from the stock of the hardware dealer. A gardener's pruning knife and a carpenter's mitre saw are the best tools for the removal of plaster dressings. A cheap potato knife, rough sharpened on a stone, is excellent for cutting through starch bandages. Crotchet needles are most useful for lifting stitches out of a sinus. Knitting needles find another purpose as a means of rupturing the membranes when this is needed in obstetrical work. Sharp and blunt retractors may be fashioned, in an emergency, by bending the tines of a fork and the handle of a spoon, respectively. A teaspoon is also useful as an elevator of the eye, when resection of the superior maxilla is performed. An inverted tea strainer is useful in the dressing after colostomy, to prevent pressure of the gauze upon the gut. A spoon-shaped potato cutter may be used, in an emergency, as a wound curette. Similarly, applicators, probes, and depressors may be improvised by twisting stout copper wire. The multiple surgical uses of the hair pin are also well known. Of stouter material, if necessary, a small self-retaining speculum can be quickly made from steel wire, it often obviates the need of an assistant when searching the hand or foot for a foreign body. A wedge of hard wood makes a gag quite useful often when administering anæsthesia. A discarded thermometer case (or a hard rubber douche point) is a serviceable handle in which to mount, with candle grease or adhesive plaster, a stick of silver nitrate. Steel spring tape measures are better than the wires generally sold for the purpose, for conducting to an X-ray tube the current from the coil or static machine; easily kept taut and quickly adjusted, they are safest for the patient and most convenient for the operator; that they are not insulated is inconsequential—the coverings on the regular wires do not insulate the induced current. Cheap powder blowers, such as are used for insecticides, may be employed as insufflators in surgical work, and pepper boxes are useful for dusting powders. Wooden skewers are serviceable nail cleaners. Rolling pins and kitchen towel racks are very convenient for adhesive plaster, rubber tissue, &c., especially for hospital dressings. Grocers' bags are the most serviceable receptacles for soiled dressings. Tar paper is a smooth, fairly waterproof material to tack on the floor when preparing a room for operation."

It will thus be seen that a little inventiveness is a very valuable asset in the equipment of both doctor and nurse, and in many instances much expense may be saved in a poor household thereby.

A practical appliance with which nurses should be acquainted is Professor Soxhlet's Feeding Apparatus. The importance of purity in regard to the food of infants is beginning to be better understood, and by means of this apparatus food can be prepared for use during a whole day, or even longer. If once the bottles are filled and closed in accordance with the directions given the food they contain is absolutely sterilised, and so remains fresh and ready for use. It remains protected from infection until given to the child.

The milk, or other food, is mixed in required proportions in a glass jug, which is graduated in ten parts. A sufficient supply for the day's use is poured from this measure into the bottles but only up to the level shown in the accompanying illustrations.



When filled, the bottles are placed in a round frame, the mouth of each is covered with an india-rubber disc, and a metal cap is dropped over the neck. The frame, with the bottles, is then placed in a saucepan which is filled with water to the level of the food in the bottles. It is then tightly covered with the lid and allowed to boil for at least ten minutes. When sufficiently cool, the frame with the bottles is removed from the saucepan and the bottles placed in the wooden stand supplied. The atmospheric pressure acting on the rubber discs seals the bottles hermetically. The food is warmed to the required heat by placing it in the warmer filled with water on the fire or a spirit lamp. When it is desired to feed the child the disc is removed and a teat put on the bottle, which is then ready for use.

Professor Soxhlet's Feeding Apparatus is obtainable from the Central Depot for Great Britain, Reitmeyer and Co., 63, Crutched Friar Street, and 111, Farringdon Road, London, E.C.

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