

any measures for the child's relief. An excellent beginning has been made by several appointments of medical inspectors and school nurses to watch over the health and deal with trifling ailments affecting the children, and we hope in time these measures will be universally adopted.

### Medical Matters.

#### TRANSFUSION.

Thirty years ago, it was a common experience to find the hero in the popular novel submitting to having a vein opened and his blood transfused into the heroine, who was, apparently, moribund from loss of blood. It reflects the change which has taken place in medical treatment that the novelist of to-day rarely indulges his fancy in this direction. Many older authorities attempted to support the method, but the majority of our modern writers raise a number of objections to it. One must realise at once that transfusion is quite incapable of doing good in cases of disease in which there is a rapid and progressive destruction of red corpuscles. The objections to transfusion include the fear of ferment intoxication. The appearance of dyspnoic attacks, cedema, and fever were supposed to depend on an intoxication with fibrin ferment and a secondary capillary thrombosis. This, however, has proved to be erroneous, and it is now certain that intravascular thrombosis can only be produced by defibrinated blood when the blood is injected too fresh or too warm, or when the fibrin coagulum has been squeezed. It is impossible to prophesy when transfusion will be tolerated without reaction, or when rigors, hæmoglobinuria, etc., will follow. The injection of saline solutions into the rectum or below the skin of the breast in many cases—that is to say, whenever there is sufficient heart power to obtain its rapid absorption—is now employed with success in many conditions in which formerly it was considered necessary to transfuse human blood direct into the patient's depleted veins. We have learnt that the circulation, in such cases, is simply starving for water, and if that can be supplied in an easily absorbable form, Nature will do the rest and supply the blood corpuscles, and the other constituents of healthy blood. One great advantage is that if such injections are too late to do any good, at any rate they will do no harm, while the old method of direct transfusion of blood was often followed by dangerous symptoms and even by death.

### Lectures on Anatomy and Physiology as Applied to Practical Nursing.\*

BY BEDFORD FENWICK, M.D.,  
*Gynaecologist to The Hospital for Women,  
Soho Square.*

(Continued from page 425, Vol. 38.)

SCIATICA is pain experienced in the sciatic nerve, and is, therefore, felt from the back of the hip, along the course of the nerve down the back of the thigh to the knee, or even down to the foot. It is sometimes caused by the pressure on the nerve of tumours inside the pelvis or even by the pressure of an overloaded rectum. In any case, the pain is intensified if the rectum is at all distended, and, therefore, as a general rule it is lessened when the bowels are kept freely acting. The more usual cause of the trouble is Rheumatism, affecting the sheath of the nerve, and due to a severe chill—sitting on damp grass, or in wet clothes. As a general rule, the treatment, therefore, is medicinal or surgical, and consists mainly in giving rheumatic remedies, and by clearing the rectum; or by the removal of the tumour or disease inside the pelvis, which has caused the nerve pressure. In many cases of sciatica of a chronic character, great relief is afforded by massage of the limb, or the application of the continuous or interrupted galvanic current along the course of the nerve. In these cases also, blisters often relieve at once; but, as a general rule, cases of sciatica do not demand the care of a trained nurse.

ANÆSTHESIA means loss of sensation, and it is used in various ways, of course, in medical phraseology, being applied to the results of the administration of drugs, such as Chloroform, Ether, Laughing Gas, which render the patient insensible, or to drugs which have an external effect, such as Cocaine, Menthol, Eucaine, and others which have a purely local result by numbing the nerves of the skin, the consequent loss of sensation being sufficient to permit of slight operations being performed. In the case of disease, however, anæsthesia is usually caused by long-continued pressure on a nerve, or by the actual destruction or division of its fibres. It is a matter of common experience, for example, that long continued pressure on the elbow causes "pins and needles," and a more or less complete loss of sensation in the fingers supplied by the compressed nerve. After a minute or two, in a healthy subject, the tingling disappears, and

\* These Lectures commenced on October 6th, 1906. Back copies of the Journal (post free 3d. each) can be obtained from the Offices.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)