

OBSTETRIC NURSING.

— BY OBSTETRICA, M.B.N.A. —

PART I.—MATERNAL.

CHAPTER V.—DUTIES DURING CONVALESCENCE.

(Continued from page 87.)

HAVING put up the night-light and made up the fire before leaving the lady's room, place a small table close to the bed, on the right side, and well in *front* of her, so that she can comfortably reach with her right hand whatever is placed upon it. Some Nurses are apt to forget this, and putting the table too near the bed's head, the patient has to rise up, or turn her hand *backwards*, to reach things; hence they often get upset or knocked off the table. Having properly positioned the table, place upon it a cup of barley or toast water and a biscuit or two (handy if required in the night)—I prefer cups to tumblers, as they are more convenient to hold from having handles,—a handbell, or a small gong, with which to summon you when required. I mentioned in a previous paper in the *Nursing Record* that the Nurse should not sleep with the patient, nor in the same room if it can be avoided, but in a closely adjoining one. Few patients are able to sleep the night through at this early stage of convalescence, and at two or three a.m. they may be glad of a cup of warm milk gruel. Let me here impress upon you that parturient women should never be kept long without some sort of nourishment, though you are on no account to awaken them, day or night, to administer it, for sleep is as precious as food. There are great, though unseen changes going on, and the system must be supported, *not* by taking too much food at any one time, but at frequent intervals, and in moderate quantities, which will allay that feeling of faintness, which is injurious to the patient, and too often, alas! relieved (?) by stimulants in lieu of nourishment. It is also wise to vary the meals as far as possible. Monotony palls upon the sick palate as much as upon the well, and our dietetic resources are not so limited as in ordinary sickness.

Many women like an early cup of tea—say at seven or eight o'clock a.m. This can only be regarded as *refreshment*, and given in deference to the wishes of the patient, and preliminary to the leading meal of the day—breakfast. This should consist of a cup of cocoa made with milk, a *lightly* poached egg, bread and butter and dry toast, or rather toast buttered dry; some marmalade or preserve can also be given if wished. With respect to cocoa, which is such a useful article of diet for those of our patients with whom it agrees, I prefer it in *blocks*. The Navy cocoa is about the best of that

form of preparation, or a decoction made *fresh* every day from nibs, and if properly made, in my humble judgment preferable to the former, when we make it an every day article of diet. It must be made one or at most two days before it is wanted; the bean should be of the *best* quality. Take two ounces of the nibs, and bruise them in a stone mortar; put them into a new tinned iron or copper saucepan (which should be kept for the purpose, as the cocoa stains it), and pour over a full quart of cold water; the nibs should boil for five or six hours, and then be strained off into a clean jug, and covered over till wanted. There is sometimes, if the bean is really good, a little fat on the surface, which must be removed before re-warming. To women who object to *thick* drinks this decoction is the most delicate and palatable form of cocoa; it can be taken with milk or cream, but it must be made with water, and it should be of a pale pink hue when done. I have known patients, who could take neither cocoa nor chocolate as drink, like and take to this decoction, to their much benefit.

After breakfast you must make preparations not only for the washing and changing of the patient, but the bed linen also, and be ready to begin at say eleven a.m. latest. Assuming that birth took place some time on a Monday, it will be the Thursday following before you can prudently venture on these increased duties, and then only if the patient's strength permit it. Have the clean sheets, pillow-cases, &c., spread out before a good fire at least an hour before you want them, so as to have them thoroughly dry and warm.

(To be continued.)

PRACTICAL LESSONS IN ELECTROTHERAPEUTICS.

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AND
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LESSON III.

Electro-Motive Force—Current Strength—Resistance—Ohm's Law—Definition of Terms.

AS indicated in Lesson II., all current flow of electricity involves two factors, which are termed respectively electro-motive force and current strength.

ELECTRO-MOTIVE FORCE

depends upon difference of potential at the poles of the generator. It is analogous to the differences

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