

Matron is that her practical training has been thorough and sufficient, and, secondly, that she has had special experience in administrative work. When a Nurses' Registration Act is placed upon the Statute book, the relative qualifications of candidates will be more thoroughly appreciated. Meanwhile, in a country where Home Rule counts for so much, it is strange for the principle to be ignored in local politics.

Medical Matters.

CAISSON SICKNESS.

Mr. Leonard Hill, lecturing last week at the Royal Society of Arts, said that the chief cause of caisson sickness was not excess of carbonic acid gas and deficiency of oxygen, but the solubility of nitrogen, not only in the blood but also in the fat of animals. If a diver were suddenly brought to the surface, or a workman were brought out of a high pressure caisson, the gas would come out of the blood in bubbles. These formed a froth and interfered with the circulation to such an extent that death might follow. At the first signs of the sickness caused by bringing a man too suddenly from a high to a low pressure he should be placed in a chamber where the high pressure could be restored. Fat food should be avoided by caisson workmen.

MALARIAL FEVER DURING THE PUERPERIUM.

The *British Medical Journal* draws attention to the two following cases from Hong Kong, recorded by Dr. Atkinson in a foreign contemporary, in which the puerperium was complicated by malaria. The first was that of an English primipara, at full term, who had been suffering from fever for some days prior to admission to hospital. The temperature, which was 101.6 degs. Fahr. on admission, was normal on the following morning, but as the blood showed simple tertian parasites and ring forms, 5 grains of quinine were ordered every four hours. Labour commenced the same evening and was normally terminated the following midday. In the evening the temperature was 104.0 degs. Fahr., due evidently to a tertian attack and not to sepsis, and the following morning it was normal again. The quinine was continued, although there was no more fever, and during the next three weeks no malarial parasites were present in the blood. The patient had only arrived in the colony a few months previously, never having had malaria, nor coming from a malarial country,

but since being in Hong Kong she had resided in a malarial locality. In the second case premature labour at eight months was induced by an attack of malarial fever, which began the day before labour commenced, and the day following birth benign tertian parasites were present in great numbers. Both cases might have been anxiously puzzling had they not occurred in a malarial country where all illnesses are so frequently complicated by malaria that it is the rule to give quinine to parturient cases whenever there is the slightest fever after labour. The author does not consider that quinine as a prophylactic should be withheld during pregnancy in women who are subject to attacks of malarial fever, as he regards the induction of abortion or premature labour as being more probably due to the malarial fever than to any ecboic action of the quinine. The general consensus of opinion points to the fact that quinine acts as a general stimulant and promoter of vital energy and functional activity, and that its ecboic action is very slight, if anything at all; and certainly, when administered during malarial fever, it expends its energy in killing the plasmodium, and does not produce any deleterious effect on the system.

INSECTS AND DISEASE.

Mr. H. Maxwell-Lefroy, in a lecture at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, at which he inaugurated a course of studies in the realm of practical entomology for the training of young students, after explaining the influence of insects on agriculture, said, in relation to disease, that the commonest blood-sucking insect of man, the bed bug, was under suspicion of carrying disease, the rat flea transmitted plague from the rat to the human being, and the big flies of the genus *Glossina* carried the dreadful and fearful disease of sleeping sickness and the allied diseases of cattle, horses, and dogs. In the early days of plague in India disinfectants were used to kill the germ. Now insecticides were used to kill the fleas and traps to catch rats. If these diseases were to be checked it would be by dealing with the transmitting insect, and thus entomology had become important. No one could say what the future held for us. Was sleeping sickness going to spread? With the warm weather was the plague flea in England going to become active and spread? Was plague going to spread in Europe as it had in India, where in fourteen years seven millions of people had died? He trusted we might never see plague or other insect-transmitted disease spreading in England, but no one could say that it would not.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)