

Medical Matters.

HOW TO AVOID POST-OPERATIVE BACKACHE.

Backache is, says the *Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette*, one of the human ills that the doctor is inclined to view with indifference. What must come will come, of course, and a lame back is as inevitable as April showers or the taxes. But Dr. Goldthwait, of Boston, views the matter differently, for he has spent several years in observation of the causes that produce wrenching of the pelvis and spinal column. In a recent article in an American contemporary he calls the attention of surgeons to the unsatisfactory method—or lack of method—in which patients are often arranged on the operating table. He tried these various faulty positions himself and experienced for a few minutes the distortion and discomfort that patients are obliged to endure—under anæsthesia, of course—throughout a long operation. He affirms that there is no possible excuse for placing patients on the table in such positions as to cause straining of the pelvic joints, sagging of the lumbar spine, and ultimate suffering from weak back.

In the Trendelenburg position the lumbar spine and the thighs do not "fit" the ordinary flat and hard operating table. They require support by means of pads or small pillows, which do not interfere in any way with operative work while, at the same time, they maintain the legs in a normal relation to the pelvis and prevent hyper-extension of the thighs by which the pelvis is dragged out of position and the sacro-iliac joints are stretched.

The lithotomy position as is often maintained in operations, with the legs supported by slings around the ankles, allows the legs to sag and causes undue strain of hips and pelvis. Dr. Goldthwait has contrived a form of leg support which puts the leg at rest, in a firmer and more natural position and avoids the evils of the ankle noose.

The illustrations accompanying his article represent very plainly the contrast between the right way and the wrong way. Every surgical nurse should give this matter careful attention. With a little more care the surgical patient might have much less pain and weakness to complain of after the operation.

THE HYGIENIC EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG.

Dr. T. N. Kelynack, speaking at the annual meeting of the National Federation of Christian Workers among Poor Children, said that a pressing question demanding study by workers amongst boys and girls of all sections of the community was that of sex hygiene. The only way of meeting the problem was by knowledge.

The Work of the School Nurse and Medical Inspection.

By Miss Lucy Brooks.

For many years past evidence has been gathered that in order to improve the physical and mental fitness of the nation it was necessary to improve the health conditions, both personal and in regard to the environment, of the children. A result of the consideration of this great need was that the medical inspection of school children was the first necessary and practical step towards remedy.

Before 1907 only a very few of the education authorities had made arrangements for the medical inspection of school children. The London School Board, and then the Bradford School Board, being the first to see the great need for stemming the wastage of human life which is sapping the population.

In 1907 came the Education (Administration Provisions) Act, which provided for the medical inspection of school children, which came into force on the first day of January, 1908.

This inspection could not have been properly accomplished by the medical man alone—it was necessary that the teacher and school nurse should co-operate. In all schools where teachers have rightly understood the meaning and intention of the new legislation they have proved sympathetic and willing helpers, and their services and co-operation are invaluable. What the mother is in the home the teacher is in school, and the school nurse serves as a link between school and home. One of the great objects of the work is to raise a higher sense of duty in matters affecting health in the homes of the people, to enlist the best services and interest of the parents, and to educate their sense of responsibility for the personal hygiene of their children. The increased work undertaken by the State for the children does not mean that the parents have less to do for themselves but more, for it is in the home that both the seed and the fruit of public health are to be found.

This crusade of health has to be carried on in singularly unfertile soil, and only those who know the conditions pertaining to the home life of these school children really realise how important and how valuable, or how far reaching in its effect, this work may be. Yet it is surprising to see how clean and tidy the children are sent to school when one knows out of what homes they have come. The mothers have a hard struggle—only one change of clothes, which have their weekly wash on

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