

### Our Prize Competition.

We have pleasure in awarding the 5s. prize this week to Miss Emily Bleazley, Old Sneyd Park, near Bristol, for her article on the question:

**HOW WOULD YOU TEACH PROBATIONERS TO FILL AND APPLY (1) HOT-WATER BOTTLES; (2) ICE-BAGS?**

#### HOT WATER BAGS.

When teaching a probationer how to fill and apply hot-water bags, the first consideration, of course, is the cure or comfort of the patient. The second consideration is the care of the bags. Thirdly, the probationer must be careful of her own hands, as splashes and consequent scalds are easy to get if care is not taken in filling.

Let us take these points in reverse order, or rather take the second one first.

To make your bag last as long as possible never fill it with boiling water. The water may be quite hot up to 200 degs. Fahr., but not boiling, as it swells and cracks the rubber. Never fill the bag while the kettle is on the fire or gas, thus bringing the bag close to the flame and risking burning it. But take your kettle off. Stand it on one side for a few minutes, or quicker, add a little cold water, and then fill your bag, first taking care to press the air out so as to avoid the splashes. The bag must then be put in a flannel cover and applied wherever required.

If the patient is quite conscious and able to move her limbs, etc., freely, she may, if she wishes, have the bag with its flannel cover next to her nightdress. But in cases where the patient is paralysed, unconscious, under, or just coming round after an anæsthetic, the bags should never be next her, but must have a good thick fold of blankets between.

#### ICE BAGS.

Ice bags should be about half filled with ice, which has been broken up into small pieces so as to equalise the weight, and to fit it in through the neck of the bag. Except when applied to an unshaven head one should never be directly applied to the patient, but should have a fold of lint between. The full weight of the bag should not be allowed to rest on the patient, but it should be hung from a pulley or cradle, or some arrangement devised to lift it so that it just rests on the part.

As soon as the ice melts the bag should be emptied and refilled, or taken off altogether. Keep the part under the bag as dry as possible.

We highly commend the papers by Miss Alice Wachter, Miss A. Edmunds, Miss F. H.

Gibert, Miss E. F. Lukey, Miss M. K. Steele, Miss F. L. Gwillim, Miss N. Thompson, Miss G. M. Browne.

Miss Gibert writes that in filling both these appliances two important things should be borne in mind: (a) the comfort of the patient; (b) economy on account of the perishable nature and expense of the material.

A hot-water bag should never be entirely filled—it will be hard and uncomfortable—but in such a manner that when the average bag is placed on a flat surface it is about two and a-half inches in thickness.

Bags after use should be hung upside down to ensure thorough drying, and be slightly inflated before being put away for an indefinite time.

In connection with filled ice bags, Miss Gibert says that a sprinkling of salt will help to intensify the cold, and sawdust may be added to soak up the water, thus assisting the ice to last for a longer period.

Miss Alice Wachter points out that new rubber bottles should be placed in a basin of cold water with the stopper out, and soaked for 24 hours, otherwise the rubber becomes porous.

In regard to ice bags, Miss Wachter says that the ice should be split in the direction of the grain. The pieces should be about the size of walnuts, for if too small it melts and gets warm too soon.

Miss Lukey is of opinion that the pieces of ice should not be larger than almond nuts. She also writes:—The probationer should be careful to place the bag so that the lid is on the top. It is advisable not to put an ice bag directly on the patient; if possible it should be suspended by means of a cradle and bandages or from the bed-posts. A patient having ice-bag treatment, especially a child, requires careful attention, being liable to collapse. The limbs must be kept warm by means of hot-water bottles and the pulse watched.

#### QUESTION FOR THIS WEEK.

How would you prepare (1) the room; (2) the bed; (3) the patient in a confinement case?

Rules for competing for this competition will be found on page xii.

#### EXAMINATIONS.

At the recent examination of probationers at the Central London Sick Asylum, Hendon, all the candidates were fortunate in satisfying the examiner. The pass list, in order of merit, is as follows:—Misses Main, Kestle, Crisp, Hill, Brown and Armstrong (equal), Curtéis, Wagstaff, and O'Callaghan.

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