

to the character of some particular worker, in which the practical knowledge of a Midwife, or the discrimination of a woman, would be invaluable. So, in whichever way the composition of the Central Board be looked at, it is seen to be eminently unworkable; while the absurdity of the first provisions which we have exposed above is, as we shall see in future criticisms, repeated again and again throughout the whole measure.

OBSTETRIC NURSING.

— BY OBSTETRICA, M.B.N.A. —

PART I.—MATERNAL.

CHAPTER VII.—THE LOCHIAL PERIOD (DUTIES DURING).

(Continued from page 88.)

ONE of the most important Nursing duties at the onset of fever is what is the best drink to give the patient. I have mentioned in a previous paper that clean distilled water is most valuable for mixing with other substances, such as tea, coffee, cocoa, and so on, but it is not suitable as a beverage by itself. Pure cold well water would be the best could we obtain it, but how rarely is this the case in town or country; and hence I strongly advise a Nurse to first filter and then boil, and if necessary refrigerate, every drop of water drunk by the patient, or used in any article of her diet. The obvious advantage of these precautions will be all the better appreciated if we first consider what is water? In its perfectly pure state as it falls from the clouds, where it is formed, it consists of two gases—one equivalent of hydrogen combined with one of oxygen—and it has then an insipid vapid taste; the first contamination comes from the atmosphere, in the form of soot, particles of dust, certain gases, and so on, which are strained out of it when it penetrates the surface of the ground as rain. The water that we drink is drawn from the soil, and has often other, and if mineral, innocuous, substances mixed with it, and in fact these mineral impurities (?) are necessary to make water a tissue-forming food, for bone has to be built up and nourished as well as muscle and nerve.

You may notice that oxygen is one of the constituents of water, as it is of air. The water we drink has it in combination with hydrogen, the air we breathe has it immensely diluted with nitrogen, the arterial blood is laden with oxygen, which is the life of every tissue of the body.

Thus air and pure water, essential to life and health, become none the less essential in disease. In fever the parched tissues must be incessantly irrigated, as it were, to preserve life in them; how important is it, then, that the fluid food for which they crave should be absolutely suited to their needs.

Next to purity of water comes purity of air—far more hard to obtain, unless our patients live in the country. Still ventilation (especially at night) and disinfectants will help us on even if living in cities.

Next to water—either pure, distilled, or aerated—comes the most grateful food in fever—fruit—which, of course, should be perfectly ripe, sound, and fresh. Of all fruit the grape contains perhaps the most sustenance, and is the most liked by the fever-stricken. England not being a vine-growing country, grapes with us must be forced or imported, and if we require them in the winter the price is prohibitive to all but the rich. In the summer and autumn we can rely upon imported grapes, which are far and away better than none at all. In selecting imported grapes for our sick we must use a little judgment. A firm, fleshy, thick-skinned grape, whether black or white, is not suitable for our patients, besides which this kind is not thoroughly ripe. I have found the white muscat (a small, round, thin-skinned, juicy grape) very refreshing, though not having much fine flavour like hot-house grapes have; but as these humble berries are only sixpence, or even fourpence, a pound, we must not expect too much of them; but, at any rate, they are ripe and refreshing, and so far acceptable to our poorer patients. It is better not to eat skin or pips; pulp and juice is all we want.

In cases where a patient is too weak to feed herself with grapes, I have taken one up with a pair of dressing forceps, and held it between her lips to suck out the juice, and then withdrew the skin. Blunt scissors will do as well, and either are better than your fingers.

Next to grapes come, in my opinion, sound, ripe pears, which we peel and cut into quarters, or even less, so that our patient can eat them handily. In winter these are denied us, and oranges and lemons come to our aid. With regard to the former, we do not often use for our patients, as it is considered they do not digest them well; but with respect to the latter, in the form of fresh lemon juice it is most valuable. It can be mixed with aerated, soda, or potash water, or made into lemonade.

Now, what is the value of fruit-food in fever, apart from its refreshing and thirst-quelling properties? Its beneficial effect upon the blood. In inflammation there is an excess of fibrin, upon

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)