

instrument, especially in the skin over a subcutaneous bone; for example, a blow on the head from a life preserver, or a kick on the shin from a heavy boot, may produce a clean-cut wound which possesses all the characteristics of an incised wound.

The amount of gaping in an incised wound is generally considerable.

The bleeding which occurs depends principally upon the size and number of vessels wounded, but is always greater than in a contused and lacerated wound of similar size and position.

Contused and lacerated wounds should be considered together, because in both the edges of the wound are usually torn and irregular, and the tissues around infiltrated with blood, and because in both, as a rule, there is a certain amount of death of the injured tissues, varying in extent in different wounds, which must separate before the process of repair can commence.

In the contused wound the soft parts in the neighbourhood are subcutaneously lacerated and infiltrated with blood, and the extent of this infiltration varies with the size of the missile which inflicted the injury and the force with which it was applied. This form of wound is usually inflicted with a blunt instrument, such as a life preserver, a heavy stick, a spent ball or fragment of shell on the battlefield.

In the lacerated wound, on the other hand, the injury is produced rather by a tearing or biting process; lacerations by machinery, the bites of large animals, or the horns of a bull act in this way, and tear more than bruise the tissues. In these wounds the edges are irregular, and the irregularity varies with the degree of elasticity of the tissues torn, and with the nature of the violence which inflicted the injury. The result produced by the varied elasticity of the tissues is well exemplified when a limb is torn off by machinery. The skin which is very elastic is very irregularly torn. The tendons of the muscles are very resistant and not easily torn; they consequently give way along their line of attachment to the muscle, and may sometimes be seen on the separated limb hanging out some inches longer than the other structures.

Punctured wounds are produced by a thrust or stab with a sharp pointed, narrow instrument, and therefore their depth is much greater than their length. They vary very much in degree, from a prick with a needle, to a stab through the body with a bayonet. They are of two different kinds, which differ much in their

behaviour and consequences; the one partaking of the character of an incised wound, the other of a contused and lacerated wound. When a punctured wound is made with a clean sharp-pointed instrument into healthy tissues, no serious consequences as a rule result, unless some deep-seated vessel has been injured, or some serious or synovial cavity has been opened; and even in these latter cases, if the wound is at once closed and no foreign body has been introduced, no serious harm is to be anticipated. The wound behaves in all respects as a clean incised wound would do. But when a wound is punctured with a blunt or triangular instrument like a bayonet, it bruises the tissues through which it passes, and produces a wound which partakes of the character of a contused and lacerated wound. In this case a certain amount of tissue is killed outright, and there must be sloughing and suppuration before repair can commence. In addition to this, punctured wounds, when deep, may open up cavities and wound the contained viscera or injure blood-vessels.

Under the term gunshot wounds may be included all injuries caused by shot or other missiles discharged from firearms, all wounds produced by stones, splinters of wood, set in motion by a shell or bullet, and wounds caused by the bursting of a shell or firearm.

These may be direct, *i.e.*, caused by a body which is projected by the force of the explosion itself, or indirect, *i.e.*, those caused by some body set in motion by the projectile. Pain is usually intense, especially great in those cases where a bullet becomes lodged under the skin, although sometimes a soldier may be unconscious that he has been wounded, owing to the excitement of battle.

Shock varies much in intensity, and is to a certain extent an index of the gravity of the case, for it is always great when one of the large cavities of the body, the abdomen or thorax, has been perforated, or where a limb has been carried away.

#### HONOURABLE MENTION.

The following competitors are awarded honourable mention:—Miss E. F. Mason, Miss B. M. Riordan, Miss E. F. Cafferata, Miss Dora Vine, and Miss Kathleen Dinsley.

#### QUESTION FOR NEXT WEEK.

Give the items for a seven days' satisfying diet for wounded soldiers on Full Diet in a Territorial Hospital, for breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper. Give the approximate cost for twenty men.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)