

MAKESHIFTS.

NURSING NOTES FROM "SOMEWHERE ABROAD."

Someone has said that "the feminine mind dearly loves a compromise." Perhaps it is heresy nowadays to speak of the feminine mind as being different, *per se*, from the masculine; but the wisdom of the ages has enshrined for us these two truths, "Necessity is the mother (not the father!) of invention" and "Half a loaf is better than no bread," and those of us who are doing familiar work among unfamiliar surroundings prove the truth of these axioms day by day.

Nothing is more odd than the way in which one hospital or unit will have a superfluity of medical or domestic luxuries, and an absolute dearth of common necessities.

There will be an abundance of bandages and even cotton-wool, as the Americans say, "to burn," but no gauze, lint, or linen for dressings, so that lengths of bandage have to be cut up and sterilised; or there will be only the valuable boracic lint with which to foment a leg that consumes three or four yards daily.

There may be quantities of phenacetin, caffeine, spartein, &c., but no rhubarb pills. The latest things in papier-maché drop-wrist splints, knee cradles, &c., but no plain splints, nor wood to make them.

Bottles of ether, chloroform, glycerine, and even alcohol, by the dozen, but cresoline measured out by the dispenser like cream.

All these are actual instances.

It is the pride of the British to be adaptable to all climates and all customs, and there is a real joy in finding or making something that will "do," and in adopting and utilising, wherever possible, some of the resources of the place in which we find ourselves.

In the dearth of ice, everyone knows the various methods of keeping our water or our Pasteurised or Tyndallised milk cool by means of the rapid evaporation of wet cloths, but another and very convenient plan is to keep the bottles in boxes lightly packed with wet sand. If wet with sea water so much the better, as the temperature will be lower.

If fly-papers are unobtainable and it is impossible to close all openings with fine wire (which also, of course, keeps out a great deal of air), we may take advantage of a peculiar limitation in the fly's wonderful optical organs. He is almost blind to certain light rays, notably blue, and if you make your room blue enough, by curtains or paper hung over the upper part of the open window or tent opening, and on the inside walls, he will no more come in than

if it were quite dark, as indeed it is to him. (It is well known that sputum in deep spittoons enamelled blue within is never visited, nor in consequence disseminated, by flies.) Sputum-cups, again, of which there are so rarely enough, can readily be improvised with little "cornets" of oiled paper fixed in skeleton cups made from bottle-wire. If once shown how, the patients will love to make them themselves. The cups, of course, must be burnt with their contents.

Oiled paper, prepared with the coarsest oil and properly dried, can be used for almost any purpose for which "tissue impermeable" or jaconet were formerly demanded.

The "turpentine and tow," so dear to our hearts for cleaning up, is now rarely to be had, and supplies of ammonia, soda, and potash often give out. We must then fall back on the "pot ashes" with which our great-grandmothers did the family washing (and very well, too). As Saint Francis of Assisi himself told us, when sprinkling it on his food, "Brother Ash is pure." Ten ounces or parts of woodash, well soaked in twenty parts of water, equal two units of washing soda. It is also, perhaps, not sufficiently known that if the supply of lysol, cresoline, or other commercially prepared disinfectant or deodoriser gives out, you can make your own, at far less expense, with the crude and apparently insoluble carbolic acid, or coal-tar oil and ordinary soft soap, using roughly a little more than half the quantity of soap that you do of acid (phenol). (Domestic chemistry should always be done by decimal weights and measures, instead of with our own impossibly complicated tables of weights and measures. Perhaps the war will sweep all those away!) Thirty grammes of soft soap dissolved in 1 litre of boiling water, and 50 grammes of crude acid makes a good standard mixture, to be diluted as required.

For rapid disinfection with formaldehyde vapour, if you have no stove, and cannot afford the permanganate of potash to mix with the formalin in equal quantities and produce the classic "combustion without fire," the same effect can be produced by using twice the quantity of quicklime, obtainable in most country districts.

If you have the misfortune to be in a part of the country suspected of cholera infection, and your life is rendered miserable by injunctions to eat or drink nothing raw, it is a comfort to remember that the cholera germ, unlike some of his brethren of other diseases, is very easily killed by sun heat or acids. If you wash and dry your strawberries well and warm them in the sun, or wash them in lemon juice, you may

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