

With a shrill fanatic's voice,
And a bigot's fiery scorn:
"Backward, ye presumptuous Nations,
Back, be humble and obey," &c.

THE STAGNANT.

The second is a milder preacher,
Soft he speaks as if he sang,
And his words, as from a book,
Issue glibly from his tongue;
High he raised his fair white hand
With an air of self-conceit:
"Stand ye still, ye restless Nations,
And be quiet all ye lands;
Earth was made by God our Father,
And to meddle is to mar;
Change is rash and ever was so,
We are happy as we are."

THE PROGRESSIVE.

The third he is a mighty preacher,
Genius flashes from his eye,
And the crowd that hear his voice,
Give him—while their souls rejoice—
Throbbing bosoms for reply:
"Standing still is childish folly,
Going backward is a crime.
Onward! ye deluded Nations,
Onward! Keep the march of time."

BEATRICE KENT.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

IN WHAT DISEASES DOES DROPSY OCCUR? MENTION SOME OF THE DUTIES A NURSE MAY BE REQUIRED TO PERFORM IN THE MANAGEMENT OF A CASE OF RENAL DROPSY.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss E. A. Noblett, London Homœopathic Hospital, Great Ormond Street, W.C.1.

PRIZE PAPER.

Dropsy.—The characteristic appearance of dropsy is a puffy, colourless swelling which pits on pressure. That is to say, if the finger is pressed over the surface a depression is made which persists for an appreciable time. The skin has a waxy hue, and, when the dropsy is excessive, a stretched, shiny appearance.

Dropsy is due to some abnormal change in the blood-vessel walls, along with an increase of pressure within the vessels, and sometimes an altered composition of the blood. These conditions are to be found as the result of inflammation, vaso-motor paralysis, or obstruction. The most common conditions associated with dropsy are nephritis, chronic valvular heart disease, and anæmia. A local dropsy, *i.e.*, confined to one limb, is most commonly the result of a thrombus. It may also be produced by any condition causing pressure, such as

a tumour, or prolonged mechanical constriction as in tight bandaging.

The term dropsy is also used for accumulations of fluid in the cavities of the body, as, for example, the pericardium or the abdomen. The fluid is confined to the cavity and does not infiltrate the tissues in the vicinity. Fluid in the abdomen is called "ascites"; a condition of general dropsy is called "anasarca."

In heart disease the dropsy first appears about the feet and ankles and gradually ascends. The dropsy of anæmia is usually confined to a puffiness of the feet and ankles, observed at the end of the day and improved by the night's rest. The dropsy in nephritis first appears about the eyes, and is most noticeable on first waking, and on the side on which the patient has been lying.

The treatment of renal dropsy is absolute rest in bed, the patient being laid between blankets—this ensures warmth. The diet should, if possible, be of milk only, so that the inflamed kidneys are relieved from the work of excretion as far as may be. Nitrogenous extractives are highly irritating to an inflamed kidney, hence the necessity of diminishing the quantity of proteids taken and of withholding such preparations as beef tea.

The skin being an excretory organ, in cases of excessive dropsy the patient may be ordered hot packs, hot-air or vapour baths. The patient is placed between blankets, the upper ones being raised by a cradle and secured round the neck and at the bottom of the bed—at the latter point steam is introduced. The patient usually remains in the bath for twenty minutes, at the end of which time the source of heat is removed and he is left for an hour or two to sweat between the blankets.

Pilocarpine (subcutaneous injections) is another means of promoting perspiration, but this is only given if there is no œdema of the lungs and the bronchioles are free. The fluid may also be drawn off from the legs by Southey's tubes, or from the internal cavities by tapping. The diet is deprived of salt.

In uræmia, chloroform inhalations may be ordered to control the convulsions, but these are given by the medical man in attendance; he also may do venesection—withdrawing about five to ten ounces of blood from a vein in the arm.

If the pain in the back is very severe, poulticing and dry-cupping are sometimes ordered.

In conditions of extensive dropsy, saline purgatives are frequently ordered in strongly concentrated solutions. Compound jalap powder is another purgative sometimes ordered.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)