

irruption of blood is not a preliminary to labour, and comes from a detachment of some portion of the utero-placental vessels. The first duty of the Nurse is to summon Medical aid—*day* or *night*. If the Accoucheur engaged, lives at a distance, or cannot attend when sent for, another Medical man must be sent for *at once*. If the attack comes on at night, the patient must be kept in bed and a piece of waterproof sheeting and a draw sheet put under her, and a change of bed clothes and night dress be put to air. The patient's head must be kept low, and the room kept cool by ventilation, but a fire must be lighted at once unless the weather is quite summerlike. Cold applications, in the way of napkins wrung out of cold water, applied to the vulva and over the uterus are generally recommended, but remember they are not to be *relied upon* to arrest the flow—that rests in Medical hands. If the lady is up at the time the hæmorrhage comes, she must *at once* be undressed and put to bed, in the way I told you of, and kept there until seen by a doctor. It may be necessary to induce labour, but that is a matter of Midwifery, rather than Nursing—or the attack may pass off and a few days' *perfect repose* in the recumbent position be all that is required. Another profuse form of præ-partum hæmorrhage is accompanied and caused by *labour pains*, and is due to cervical attachment of the placenta. Here, as in the previous instance, Medical aid must be instantly summoned, and Nurse must make préparations for the labour. The patient must have clean night dress put on and fastened round her waist, and a loose bed-jacket over that—an abundant supply of *hot and cold* water must be ready for use.

(To be continued.)

Common Poisons and their Detection.

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CHAPTER I.—POISONS.

A KNOWLEDGE of poisons and their detection may prove valuable under many circumstances, and is, indeed, necessary to all engaged in the profession of nursing. It is well known that many manufactured articles are possessed of a beauty of dangerous origin, and in the fresh green of preserved peas and the like may lurk powerful destroyers of physical harmony.

It is difficult to state exactly what one means by a "poison," so very wide is the field to which the

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term may be applied. By one well-known chemist (A. W. Blyth) it is described as "a substance of definite chemical composition, whether mineral or organic, capable of being taken into any living organism, and causing, by its own inherent chemical nature, impairment or destruction of function." Another authority (Wm. Thomson, F.R.S.) defines it as "anything which acts physiologically on the body to impair health or destroy life, except heat and electricity."

Since the days of Hecate, daughter of Perses, the goddess of poisons; through those dark ages when the Egyptian priests kept their religious mysteries under the "penalty of the peach"; through more recent periods, when flourished the abhorred wretch who made a trade of providing death-dealing draughts, by boiling arsenic in water, whereby women might safely rid themselves of troublesome husbands; down to our enlightened times, perverted intelligence has been and is directed to the taking of human life by the secret help of noxious drugs. How many have been done to death in this manner it is impossible to imagine. The analyst of to-day, profiting by the experience and experiments of past masters in the chemical art, is enabled to cast the light of knowledge upon what, in other times, would have proven dark secrets, and point out with certainty what means the poisoner has employed to do his victim to death.

People suffer from slow poisoning without knowing it. In a badly-ventilated theatre, for instance, many will feel drowsy and finally lose consciousness, falling off into a deep slumber, from the effects of the noxious gas which they inhale.

Poisons have not always the same action. Sufferers from lung diseases will, it is asserted, take large quantities of antimony, while persons suffering from spinal paralysis take strychnine in unusual doses. Some people by habit become confirmed poison-takers, as is too well known to those who are brought into contact with the half-dazed, sallow-skinned opium-eater. Poisons may be divided into several classes, according to their different effects. Some cause death immediately, or in a few seconds, as prussic acid. Others act as irritants, narcotics, delirians, convulsives; and some produce complex actions. Poisons may be gaseous, solid, or liquid. They may occur ready-formed in nature, or be prepared by artificial means. In whatever form they may be met our education is by no means complete until we are acquainted with their appearance, properties, and methods of detection.

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