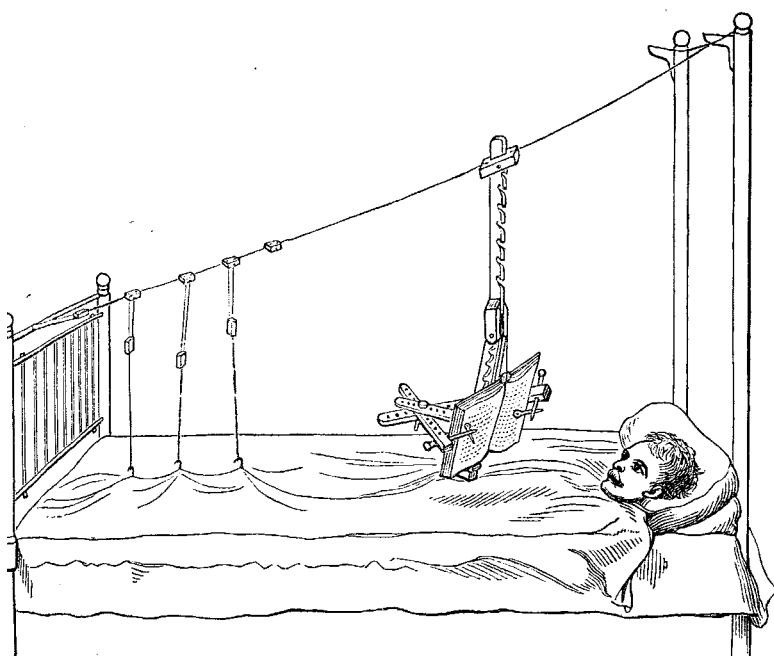


New Inventions.

PATENT BOOKHOLDER.

THIS is a very ingenious contrivance, invented and patented by Mr. Delabere May of Bath, for holding a book at any angle in an overhanging position so as to enable a person in the recumbent position to read comfortably without the labour of holding up the book. It can be easily fitted to any bed or couch, and has the great merit of being very moderate in price. Coupled with it is a method of keeping the bedclothes suspended over a limb or any part of the body, giving all the advantages now derived from the use of a



cradle, without the inconvenience which attends it. This is effected by means of hooks fitted with flat heads, like drawing-pins, passed through the blankets and fastened by a string to the cord of the bookholder, as shown in the drawing. A piece of elastic with a weight attached to steady the bookholder would probably be a useful addition to the apparatus, and a card of detailed instructions as to the manner of putting together the various pieces of which it is composed appears to be required. It is very portable, as it can be taken to pieces and packed in a small box of card board and weighs under a pound.

THE "BEAUMONT TEAPOT."

ANY suggestion that tends to enhance the wholesomeness of tea-drinking cannot be unworthy of notice, so that no apology is needed for calling attention to a device submitted to us by Messrs R. and W. Wilson & Sons, of London, and which consists in an addition to the teapot of the ordinary pattern of a movable receptacle for the tea affixed at the entrance of the spout. The advantages attending this modification are—(1) that the receptacle in question may be removed when the proper time for the steeping of the tea has expired, and thus the infusion may be kept hot without the possibility of its acquiring the deleterious properties of the leaves; (2) that the beverage is kept perfectly free from grounds, so that the adjunct of a strainer, which it is impossible to keep thoroughly clean, and which is very apt to get clogged, is rendered unnecessary. It will thus be seen that the invention offers an important improvement in the process of tea-making.

MAJOR AMPUTATIONS PERFORMED ANTISEPTICALLY.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I beg to thank Mr. Frederick Page for his rejoinder and the answer he has given to the queries in my first letter. In Mr. Page's communication of the 14th ult. we were told that during the year 1887 in the Royal Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne, sixty patients had been submitted to sixty-two major amputations of the limbs and two only had died. I admit that such a low death-rate is an achievement, and that Mr. Page and his colleagues are to be congratulated upon the excellence of their work; but the result, looked at with the knowledge, the qualifying knowledge, of the age of the patients, which last week Mr. Page detailed as follows: thirty-one patients were under twenty years (no death), fourteen were between twenty and forty years (one death), ten were between forty and sixty years (no death), and five were over sixty years (one death)—after all, shows how true is the well-known surgical axiom—viz., that the younger the patient the more likely is recovery to follow, and the older the patient the less likely. One word regarding the use of the expression "antiseptic." Mr. Bryant, a year or two since, in a lecture delivered in London, dwelt in a very *apropos* manner upon the necessity of every writer who employed the term "antiseptic" individualising what he meant. The antiseptic treatment of wounds is now universally practised, but the method, as well as the details of the method, vary so much, that it has long become essential, if any instruction is to be obtained from the recorded results of the practice of any given surgeon, that an explanation should be afforded of the so-called antiseptic method adopted by that surgeon. I confess that at one time I considered that I perfectly understood what was meant by the phrase Listerian treatment of wounds, but at the present moment I believe I am correct in saying that Listerism is a "dark horse"; what it is and what it achieves are known only to those whose location is within the four walls of King's College Hospital. Mr. Page's amputations were all performed under the spray cloud. I have never used the spray for an amputation; my dependence for a good result has always rested upon the most perfect cleanliness of the patient, operator, assistants, instruments, sponges, and room, both during the operation and afterwards.

The following abbreviated narration of my last case but one of thigh amputation will place on record my method and its result. On June 9th last I amputated at the lower third the right thigh of a well-grown boy aged ten years. Every bleeding point was most carefully tied by very fine silk thread, which for months had been soaking in a 1 in 20 carbolic acid solution. The interior and the exterior of the stump having been well doused with a solution of perchloride of mercury, 1 in 3000, the edges were coupled by catgut suture inserted at half-inch intervals, except the centre (the lowest point of the face of the stump) where a short indiarubber drainage tube was inserted. The line of suture was covered by a piece of green protective, over this and the stump some wet, followed by some dry, gauze were laid, both being fixed in position by a bandage of the same material; then the whole of the stump, thigh, and pelvis was enveloped in a thick layer of mercurial wool, maintained firmly in its place by gauze bandages; a wooden splint without padding having been applied behind the stump and thigh, a flannel bandage was evenly wrapped over it and the whole of the dressings, and the patient removed to his bed. As no pain was complained of and the temperature remained normal the dressings were not removed until June 17th (eighth day) when it was seen that the wound had entirely healed, except where the drainage tube protruded; this was removed as well as some of the sutures, and similar dressings were reapplied. The day previously the lad had been removed from his bed on to a couch, and this change was continued daily until, on the fifteenth day from the operation, the stump upon inspection was found to be firmly healed "all along the line." The patient was permitted to move about on crutches, and soon after returned to his home. The cost of the dressings used in this case was estimated by my house surgeon, Mr. Gough, to be about five shillings, not a serious trespass upon the funds of the hospital for the complete healing of a thigh amputation wound.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Wolverhampton, July 31st, 1888.

T. VINCENT JACKSON.