

THE MODERN ARMY SURGEON.

Accounts of their work as told by surgeons who have seen service along the greatest battle line in history show that the service rendered by modern army surgeons at the front differs materially from anything heretofore experienced by our profession. True, there are field hospitals far in the rear, to which ambulances convey wounded soldiers, but the most merciful work is done by hundreds of army surgeons right along the battle line. With antiseptic gauze and bandages in one pocket, with a little chloroform and a little tincture of iodine in another, with a pocket case of indispensable instruments, ligatures and needles, and above all with a hypodermic syringe and an abundance of narcotic, anodyne and stimulating tablets, the doctors crawl along on hands and knees from one wounded man to another and lying by his side administer first aid and much needed relief.

In this way many lives are saved that would otherwise be lost, much suffering is alleviated and the dreaded gangrene is prevented from infecting the wound.

No soldier of the line, no officer in command or leading his troops, is more truly heroic than these devoted doctors who are thus risking, and often losing, their lives in the service of humanity, without expectation of honor or reward beyond the consciousness of duty well done.

ALCOHOL NOT AN ANTIDOTE FOR PHENOL POISONING.

Few recent propositions in materia medica and therapeutics have received more universal credence than that diluted alcohol is a complete chemical antidote for carbolic acid poisoning. The skin can be washed in the pure acid and if immediately bathed in 50 per cent alcohol will escape injury.

A tablespoonful has been taken into the mouth, spat out instantly and diluted alcohol taken in its place, and there was no burn. What better proof of its antidotal properties

could be required of alcohol? But in view of the fact that cases of phenol poisoning do die in spite of lavage with whiskey or alcohol, certain investigators began to realize that there was a great difference between the results of the treatment of external and internal phenol poisonings: so a series of experiments was inaugurated. Small animals were given phenol in increasing doses until the lethal amount was determined. Then fatal doses of phenol were administered to such animals, and their stomachs were washed out with pure water, diluted alcohol, or saturated solution of sulphate of soda, more commonly known as Glauber's salts. These remedies were administered at certain intervals varying from five minutes to thirty minutes after giving the phenol, only one antidote being tried in each case. It was found that when the lavage was instituted within five minutes most of the animals recovered regardless of which was used. The deaths, however, were more numerous after the alcohol treatment. When the poison had been allowed to remain in the stomach undisturbed for from 5 to 15 minutes most of the animals died, the only recoveries being under the sulphate of potash treatment. In every series those treated with the alcohol were first to die. In fact, lavage with saturated solution of Glauber's salts was the only treatment that seemed to help. Alcohol was worse than nothing. Now carbolic acid has become the favorite poison for suicides. It is prompt and painless, often causing immediate unconsciousness, and death in thirty minutes. Clinical histories of alcohol addicts taking phenol to commit suicide, and being rescued by lavage with diluted alcohol or pure whiskey are not uncommon. To reconcile this apparent contradiction it has been suggested that in such cases the cells have acquired such an affinity for alcohol that they absorb it to the exclusion of phenol. This seems a weak explanation but is the only one offered so far. It would seem necessary that text-books on therapeutics should amend their statements that diluted alcohol is the best antidote for carbolic acid

poisoning. Saturated solution of sulphate of soda (Glauber's salts) is the only reliable antidote. Next to that, pure water is best. Alcohol used instantly on external phenol burns will relieve them, but internally it is very different except in the case of a drunken person.

As the JOURNAL has previously stated, it believes the law should make it more difficult for the laity to obtain so potent a poison as phenol, even for domestic sanitation. There are many better and safer germicides, and it is only in slight degree a deodorizer.

PRACTICAL EUGENICS.

The JOURNAL has received a brochure with the above title, by Dr. Thos. V. Williamson, of Norfolk, Virginia, prepared for the Social Bureau of that city. Though the subject has been frequently discussed by the press, lay and medical, yet the paper claims attention by its brevity and conciseness. It recites the claim that 60 per cent of all men have been infected with venereal disease and that a similar per cent of all gynecological operations for inflammatory conditions are necessitated by venereal infection, often contracted from husbands. It estimates that the requirement of a certificate from a state board that the applicant for a marriage license had passed a thorough physical and laboratory examination and had been found free from venereal taint "would prevent approximately 90 per cent of venereal carriers from entering the bonds of matrimony." But it considers that before this ideal condition can be established it will be necessary to educate the people so that young women will know the risk they are taking and will refuse to blindly hazard destruction. Their safety must be assured by a Wassermann, a Luetin and a whole cycle of scientific tests, all paid for by the state. Such, though not the quoted language of Dr. Williamson, are the vital points in his brief. It would seem that he depends upon the instinct of self-preservation to lead the women to make the eugenic demands.

The education that will save the race is the teaching of our boys the true inwardness, the unspeakably disgusting character of what seems a temptation only because robed in silk and masked in mystery. At the proper age teach them to take care of themselves for their own sake. Take them to the hospitals and the dispensaries and let them see the results of what some of their vile companions miscall pleasure. A few such lessons will save them.

THE NEW ADVERTISING POLICY OF THE NEW ORLEANS MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

This JOURNAL is glad to read in the *New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal* for April, 1915, that "at the instigation of the Orleans Parish Medical Society it will, in the future, refuse to accept for its advertising department all preparations condemned by the Council on Pharmacy of the American Medical Association, and "will eliminate all such as we now carry as soon as existing contracts will permit or the advertisers will consent to a cancellation." We felicitate this staunch, reliable old publication upon taking this important step.

Well-established publications like the *New Orleans Journal* can count upon ultimate success by adopting such a policy, while weak publications as are found in every state cannot survive without the money so willingly paid by advertisers of unethical preparations, and hence are more a hindrance than a help to legitimate medicine.

The *New Orleans Journal* is to be congratulated upon eliminating from its advertising pages the proprietary remedies that are objectionable to the great majority of the thinking members of the medical profession.

SURGERY OF THE BLOOD-VESSELS.

Among the book reviews in this number of the JOURNAL will be found one with the above title. Those of our readers who are espe-