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## EFFECT OF ALCOHOL ON A PATIENT IN LABOR

DEAR EDITOR: A few days ago, in talking with one of the first gynæcologists of this city, I learned something of such importance that I hasten to pass it on, though it may not be so new to other nurses as to me. He was speaking of the danger of taking alcohol without a doctor's order and in proof of it told me the following story:

A patient of his waked one morning, and, feeling that her labor was beginning, took a dose of brandy before sending for doctor or nurse.

"She did not know," he said, "its effect on the uterus, and did it in ignorance, but it got in its work before I could get in mine and she died. I attribute her death entirely to the brandy."

"What did it do?" I asked.

"Acted like a premature dose of ergot and prevented the natural expansion. We worked over her all day but we could not save her."

I asked if it was an effect peculiar to brandy or if whiskey would have acted the same. He replied that it was the alcohol and any liquid containing it should never be allowed during the expansive stage of labor.

I do not give the physician's name because I neglected to ask his permission to do so, but he is very high in the profession.

Surely this is one more argument in favor of our using our opportunities to teach the unknown dangers in the use of drugs without prescription.

It would be interesting if we could learn in how many cases of tedious labor the patients had "braced up" on alcoholic stimulant. Perhaps some nurse who has large obstetrical practice in a maternity hospital can make some observations along this line. When I was doing mission work once I was called to a case where doctor, nurses (attendant neighbors), and patient were all half drunk and the baby's neck had been broken in the use of instruments, but that hardly comes in the same class.

Let us do our uttermost to teach the dangers from drugs that so many do not suspect. And let us use every opportunity of learning the facts that will make us able to teach accurately and impressively.

Very sincerely yours,

Brooklyn, N. Y.

E. BERTHA BRADLEY, R.N.

## BREAD-MAKING

DEAR EDITOR: In your editorial upon bread-making, I was glad to read ideas upon the subject the same as my own. When I am at home, off duty, I sometimes make a loaf of bread and had just done so when called upon my last case. The lady with whom I live put the loaf in my suit case. At the first meal in the family of my patient I produced my bread, explaining that the lady with whom I lived insisted upon my taking it. When the loaf was finished the lady in the family where I was nursing said: "You may make some *bread* if you want to." It was a congenial, convenient place and I could do so easily without neglecting my work. The children ate some of the rolls and one of them said: "Miss Huntington I like your bread."

I believe that pure bread cannot be bought. One of the important events of President Roosevelt's administration was his signing the pure food bill, and an important work for the future president is to regulate the manufacture of

bread that it may be pure. Does not what we are and what we do depend somewhat upon the purity of the food we eat? Bakers' bread is anything but pure.

Bakers' bread is adulterated, therefore it is not pure; said to be made of the most inferior of flour, therefore it is non-nutritious; always sour, though the majority of people do not detect it, therefore it is poisonous and can cause slight autotoxæmia.

If people realized the value of whole wheat, graham, and corn breads, in their healthful effect upon the liver, and also the value of pure home-made bread, the intelligence and the health of the nation would be improved.

I have always thought that purity of food was an overlooked question and not long ago I read the statement of a scientific man, whose name I do not recall, that most illness was caused by poisonous effects of impure food; but that the condition of having impure food was hard to overcome because men, as a rule, marry women who are simply good-looking, not inquiring whether or not they are intelligent.

EDITH C. HUNTINGTON, R.N.

#### REORGANIZATION

DEAR EDITOR: May I express my opinion regarding the meetings of the Superintendents' Society and the Associated Alumnae? Our present method is nothing short of absurd. Why divide our forces and limit the good we can do or the good to be gained by meeting in different places at the same time, instead of the same place at the same time? Nurses as a rule are limited in both time and money, and consequently must choose one or the other, when it seems entirely unnecessary they should be deprived of either. It looks like bad management or possibly a lack of broad general interest for the best good of all. I feel sure that if the meetings were held in the same place it would simplify the matter of reduced railroad rates.

Chicago.

IDA M. TICE.

[The attention of a correspondent signing herself "A Scottish Nurse" is directed to the fact that no anonymous letters are published in this department. The full name and address of the writer must accompany her communication, though only initials need appear in the JOURNAL if so desired.—Ed.]

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#### ANTI-OPIUM BILL PASSED

The anti-opium bill passed the Senate, and will thus become a law. The bill forbids the importation of opium into the United States except for medicinal purposes. The successful passage of the bill came in time to be of value to our delegates in Shanghai, in attendance at the anti-opium conference.