WHAT TO DO IN EMERGENCIES

From two of the valuable papers on "Domestic Nursing," contributed to the Christian Union by Miss E. R. Scovil. of the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, we cull and condense the following extracts for the benefit of our non-professional readers :—

When an accident happens there is too often valuable time lost in frantic rushing hither and thither, or in hasty application of unsuitable remedies that do more harm than good. A little self-possession and the exercise of a certain amount of common sense will enable one to be of the greatest use at such times, and perhaps even the means of saving life itself.

Every household should have a store of simple remedies, and also antidotes for some of the more common kinds of poisons. They should be kept where they are easily accessibl ,—not in a locked closet, of which the key is sure to be lost at the very moment when it is most needed,—and in a place well known to each member of the family.

In very severe cases of burns or scalds the nervous system is so prostrated by the shock that there is often less suffering than when the injury is slighter. The pulse will be small and quick, and a stimulant should be administered without waiting for the doctor. A teaspoonful of raw brandy, or a tablespoonful in an equal quantity of water, may be given.

The whole theory of dressing is to exclude the air. The more effectually this is done the greater will be the relief afforded. When only a small surface is injured, an artificial skin may be formed with flexible collodion ; or if that is not at hand common mucilage or gum arabic dissolved in warm water will answer. As one layer dries another should be painted over it.

An excellent remedy for burns and scalds is a mixture of lime-water and sweet or linseed oil in equal parts An other excellent one is bicarbonate of soda. The common kind used for cooking purposes may be employed. A thick layer should be spread over the part and covered with a light wet bandage, keeping it moist and renewing it when necessary.

When the clothing takes fire it is well if the victim have presence of mind to stand perfectly still. Motion fans the flame and causes it to burn more quickly. He many throw himself on the floor and roll over and over, but never move from place to place seeking help. A woollen shawl, piece of carpet, or rug may be wrapped tightly around the person, not covering the face, and if there is time to wet it so much the better, but there is not an instant to lose, particulary if the clothing is of cotton. The great object is to prevent the flames from getting down the throat and the chest from being burned.

In a severe cut on the finger, when the flow of blood renders dressing it a matter of difficulty, it may be checked by tying a string tightly around the base af the finger. It must then be washed in cold water, and the cut can be dressed at leisure with diachylon or court plaster, and the string removed.

Bleeding from the nose may be stopped by lying flat on the back, with the head raised and the hands held above it. The nose must be covered with a cloth filled with pounded ice, or wrung out of ice water. The head should never be held over a basin, as the position encourages bleeding. The blood may be received in a wet sponge.

When one coughs or spits up blood the first thought is that it must be from the lungs A slight knowledge of the characteristic of the blood from different parts that may come through the mouth will sometimes save much needless anxiety. Blood from the lungs is always bright red in color, because it has just been purified by contact with the air. It is frothy, mixed with mucus, in small quantity, and is usually coughed up. Blood from the stomach is dark red, almost black, is mixed with particles of food, comes in large quantities, and is vomitted. Blood from the mouth and gums is of a red color, and usually mixed with saliva. Unless it has first been swallowed, it is not vomited or coughed up.

In haemorrhage from the lungs the head and shoulders must be raised. Some physicians recommend a tablespoonful of table salt to be given in a tumbler of water. It is always safe to give cracked ice. Bleeding from the stomach may be checked by the application of a mustard plaster over the stomach. Cracked ice should be given and the doctor sent for.

In bleeding from wounds or recent amputation there are three things that may be done.

First, press the fingers or hand over the bleeding point.

Second, press on the main artery supplying the wound ; or, if this cannot be found, apply a bandage as tightly as possible above the wound. An excellent tourniquet may be improvised by knotting a handkerchief loosely around the limb, thrusting a short stick through it, and twisting it tight The blood from an artery is bright red and comes in spurts with each beat of the heart, while that from the veins is a dark purplish color and flows in a steady stream. When the bleeding is from an artery the pressure should be applied between the wound and the heart, when from a vein the limb must compressed beyond the wound.

Third, raise the part above the rest of the body, that the blood may drain out of it, and support it on pillows. It should be bathed in ice water and have ice wrapped in cotton cloths laid on it. If faintness ensues the sufferer should not be immediately roused, as this is nature's remedy and acts by lessening the force and activity of the circulation. A physician should be called in as soon as possible.

When poison has been swallowed the first thing to be done is to get it out of the stomach as soon as possible, before it has been absorbed into the system. As a stomach-pump does not form part of the furniture of an ordinary house, this must be effected by means of an emetic. Should none other be accessible, stir a tablespoonful of mustard into a tumbler of water, and give one fourth of it at a time, following each dose with a cup of warm water; table salt will do as well, using as much as the water will dissolve. When vomiting is over, the whites of two eggs stirred in a tumbler of water may be given, and as much warm milk as can be taken

If an alkali, as potash or lime, has been swallowed, give any acid, lemon juice for instance, to neutralize it ; without waiting for the emetic to act.

In opium poisining, after an overdose of laudanum, etc., keep the person in motion, dash water in the face and on the chest; slap the chest with a wet towel, and give strong coffee. If the breathing is sluggish try artificial respiration. There are several ways of doing this. One of the best methods is to take hold of the arms above the elbows, draw them, above the head until the hands meet, lower them bending the elbows, and bring them up over the stomach, pressing them on it to expel the air from the lungs. This must be repeated sixteen times in a minute

Faintness is caused by the interruption of the supply of the blood to the brain. The head should be placed lower than the body, that the blood may run toward it. Tight clothing should be loosened, particularly about the waist and throat, cold water sprinkled on the face, and smelling-salts held to the nose. Great care should be taken that strong ammonia is not used, lest the olfactory nerve be injured. A little stimulant may be given when the person begins to recover.

The symptoms of hysteria are sometimes very alarming, and it is difficult to distinguish between real and hysterical pain. If the mind of the sufferer can be diverted from herself the pain ceases. She rarely injures herself by bitting the tongue or falling heavily. She cries out repeatedly, and cannot bear to have her eyes touched. After the fit is over she is drowsy. The liberal application of a wet towel to the face and chest will produce satisfactory results. Self-control often becomes impossible. so the utmost kindness should be combined with firmness. Scolding is worse than useless. The invalid will sometimes recover more quickly if left alone, out of sight, but not of hearing.

REMEDY FOR ASTHMA.—As a remedy for asthma the Euphorbia piluliféra, or pill bearing sponge, has of late attracted attention. The plant is indigenous in Australia (Queensland) and the tropical portions of Asia, Africa and South America. The decoction is made by steeping an ounce of the fresh or half as much of the dried weed in two quarts of water and reducing it by simmering to one quart, of which the dose is a wine-glassful to three or four wine-glassfu's. or of the aqueous extract one or two grains daily.