

The occurrence, however, of a rash on the skin after certain drugs and even after various indigestible articles of diet is very common. It is not generally known that in some people the administration of mercury causes an eruption which strongly resembles that seen in simple scarlatina, and a similar rash may follow the administration of belladonna or antipyrin, or even opium or quinine. Pork and various shell-fish also produce in some persons marked reddening of the skin with or without the characteristic itching of nettle-rash; and finally, both diphtheria and small-pox are frequently preceded by a rose red eruption on the skin. In view of all these facts it is small wonder that the diagnosis of scarlet fever is in many cases somewhat difficult to make. The absence of a sore-throat and the fact that the temperature is not markedly raised will, however, prove sufficient in most cases to exclude the presence of scarlet fever when the eruption has been caused by the administration of drugs or by the ingestion of various articles of diet.

Sponge Grafting.

FOR many years, it has been a recognised plan of treatment for the cure of large ulcerated surfaces to transplant a piece, or a number of minute pieces, of healthy skin upon the ulcer, and it is known that, if successful, from each one of these, a fresh centre of new skin will be formed, so that these little islands, under favourable circumstances, will extend and unite together until the ulcerated surface is completely closed over. The one difficulty in the treatment was the obtaining of pieces of new skin, as in many cases where prolonged ulceration had existed it was by no means unusual to find that pieces of the patient's own skin grafted on to the ulcer did not grow, and naturally enough it was somewhat difficult to persuade others to yield portions of their integument for the benefit of the patient. Recently, however, it has been found that other substances grafted upon a wound will act in the same manner as pieces of new skin, and, amongst these, ordinary sponge has been found to be one of the most successful substitutes. An Italian contemporary recently described a case in which a large surface of ulceration was closed by means of about thirty pieces of sponge grafted upon it. They were kept in position by a piece of oiled silk, over which a gauze dressing was placed, antiseptic precautions of course being taken. The suppuration rapidly diminished, and in less than four weeks the ulcer was cured. It is thought that the sponge both acts as a sort of absorbent filter for the pus thrown off by the ulcer, and also as a kind of scaffolding upon which new vessels

and new granulations build; at any rate it is remarkable that these pieces of sponge are apparently broken up and absorbed into the body, and their practical effect is certainly beyond all question.

Science Notes.

ANÆSTHESIA FOR THE LOWER ANIMALS.

IT is satisfactory to learn from the columns of the *Lancet* that there is at least one veterinary surgeon who regards operations on lower animals without the aid of chloroform as "veritable and revolting acts of cruelty and butchery." That is how they must appear to everyone who is not hardened to them by long usage, but it is always difficult for outsiders to influence the customs of a profession, and there are still, it is said, veterinary surgeons who would smile at the mere suggestion of chloroforming a horse or a sheep. Who could have believed that forty years ago an able and eloquent appeal was made on behalf of these animals? Sir Francis Head, in a book entitled "The Horse and his Rider," says, speaking of the introduction of anæsthetics for man: "Now, if in return for this extraordinary alleviation, or rather annihilation, of all sufferings under surgical treatment, man should deem it his duty to render thanks to that Omnipotent Power from which it has proceeded, is it possible for him practically to perform any more acceptable act of acknowledgment than to allow the dumb creatures in his service to participate in a blessing which, by Divine authority, has been imparted to the possessors, not exclusively of human reason, but without favour or exception of animal life." Again, "If, therefore, man to this enormous extent is benefited by chloroform, what right has he to withhold it from his own animals, to whom, not only in equity, but by the laws of God, it belongs as much as it belongs to him? Their claims are so affecting and so obvious, the remedy that would save them from all pain is so cheap and simple, that we feel it is only necessary to appeal to the public to obtain by acclamation a verdict in their favour." Forty years—and how little has been gained in favour of the animals so far. Still there has been a gain. Those whom we may justly assume to be the more enlightened and more skilful of veterinary surgeons, use anæsthetics and recommend their use, not only on the ground of humanity, but because by their aid successful operations are more numerous and hence there is a gain to the stock-farmer. We are informed by the correspondent of the *Lancet* that an apparatus for chloroform inhalation by farm-stock has been devised and is supplied. A horse probably requires more chloroform than any other domestic animal, and for a horse two-pennyworth is said to be sufficient.

It was recently suggested that the numerous deaths under chloroform which have occurred among human patients may be due to giving a too concentrated vapour at first, before the heart has adapted itself to the changed conditions. Fortunately it has been the experience of veterinary surgeons that it is safe, in the case of their patients, to administer a fairly concentrated vapour at first, and thus the struggling stage can be diminished.

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