

Medical Matters.

ANKLE STRAIN.



ALL those who have experienced the accident known as a sprained ankle are aware of the violence with which the injury takes place, and of the painful and disagreeable results, in the shape of swelling, pain, stiffness and inability to move the joint. It is often described as a joint accident pure and simple, but a learned observer has recently published a *brochure* in which he proves that the injuries which take place are not connected with the ankle joint itself, but are really lacerations through the substance of one or more of the muscles of the foot and the ligaments around them. The most practical point, however, is that the treatment should be as much as possible preventive; and that, therefore, persons who are subject to weakness of the foot muscles, which brings about ankle sprain, should wear sufficiently strong boots to obtain artificial support. For curative treatment of the strain, nothing is more valuable than massage, commenced at an early stage, and in fact, as soon as the first swelling commences to subside.

PRESCRIBING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

A STORY which has recently been published illustrates the difficulties under which medicine is pursued in semi-barbarous States even at the present day. The Vizier of an Oriental sovereign consulted an English physician, who found that he was suffering from a bilious attack, and therefore brought him a box of blue pills, from which he took two, and handed them to the patient. The Vizier, however, to his intense surprise, immediately pulled him down and forced the pills into the physician's own mouth, with the effect that he involuntarily swallowed them. "Now," said the patient, with an air of triumph, "I will take two myself in a little time." He was for some time reticent as to the reason of his extraordinary conduct, but afterwards explained that it was a customary precaution of the country in order to make certain that the physician did not intend to administer poison to the patient. The story throws a vivid light not only upon the methods in which the medical profession in Oriental

countries are supposed to exercise their gifts of healing, but also as to the manner in which the professors of the art are liable to be treated. When the doctor in question pointed out that his only object was to benefit the patient, and that if poison had been placed in the pills the patient would have caused his death, the only remark the Vizier could make, was "Ah, God is great," and so the matter dropped.

EMBALMING.

THERE is an increasing demand in various parts of the world for the efficient performance of embalming; the bodies of those dying in distant lands being thus prepared to be conveyed home to their native country for burial. It is well known that the ancients possessed the secret of this method in a high degree; but within recent years, and with advanced knowledge of anatomy and of the effects of drugs on the human body, it has become possible for results to be obtained, at least as good as those which were gained by Egyptian embalmers four thousand years ago. In America, embalming has become almost a science, and has proved to be successful in totally arresting the progress of putrefactive changes, and thus rendering the body innocuous during even prolonged transit, whilst the appearance of the face can be preserved free from all processes of decay for a considerable length of time. The method which is adopted is to make a small incision in the arm, over the chief vein, and by opening this, a powerful antiseptic fluid can be injected into the vessels, which permeates every part of the organism, and thus effects the desired results, while no unsightly traces of the operation are left behind. This is, of course, a totally different process from that by which the mummies of ancient Egypt were treated. It seems certain that some fluid was also injected into their vessels, but the prevailing knowledge of anatomy could not have been very great, because many of the mummies show that for this purpose deep gashes were made in all the limbs—a proceeding which a knowledge of the circulation of the blood has proved to be not only unnecessary but unscientific. Then again, embalming as at present practised is only performed in order to preserve the body for a comparatively short time. Mummification aimed at the preservation of the corpse for centuries.

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