

Medical Matters.**ABSORPTION OF DRUGS.**

It is a well-known fact that healthy skin is not only able to absorb a large amount of certain drugs, but that it can do so to a greater extent than the amount of the dose which is usually given by the mouth. Some French observers have recently been investigating this subject, and have shown that, for example, salicylate of methyl is very easily taken up by the skin, is changed into salicylate of sodium in the blood, and produces the same effect in cases of rheumatism as is well known to result from the latter drug when administered by the mouth. The method which was employed in these cases was to apply the liquid with a brush to the skin, usually on the thigh, and to cover the surface over with gutta-percha tissue and cotton wool; the addition of lard or vaseline to the drug appears to somewhat diminish its absorption. The great advantages of this system are that drugs can thereby be used which, when administered internally, cause more or less irritation of the stomach; and also that, when sedatives are employed, a greater effect is produced locally upon painful parts than when the same amount of the same drug has been given by the mouth. It should be remembered, however, by Nurses that, before any outward skin application is made, it is essential that the surface should have been thoroughly cleansed and carefully dried.

THEOBROMINE.

A WELL-KNOWN French physician has called attention recently to the great usefulness of Theobromine in case of kidney disease, and that it is one of the best diuretics at present in use, relieving dropsy, and increasing the action of the kidney to a most marked extent. The quantity of urine excreted after the first dose of the remedy is usually greatly increased; and it shows, even when its use is prolonged for some time, no marked poisonous effects. The cases which are quoted, in which the drug has been employed, prove also the important fact that it frequently produces the most marked effects and the most beneficial results in those patients for whom the ordinary

diuretics have been tried without success. It may, therefore, be confidently expected that this drug will receive the careful attention of medical men in this country.

BATHS IN BRONCHITIS.

A PLAN of treatment which is largely adopted in French Hospitals, in cases of Bronchitis in children, is that of frequent warm baths. It is a well-known fact that in young or delicate children an ordinary attack of bronchitis may involve the smaller bronchial tubes, and that the danger then often becomes extreme. Children, then, who are found to be suffering from inflammation of the larger bronchi, and who are at all feverish, are given baths at a temperature of 100° F. for seven or eight minutes at a time, and every three hours or so, until their temperature is found to be only, or below, 101° F. It is stated that the feverishness disappears rapidly, that the skin acts freely—thus, of course, relieving the lungs—and that the chest symptoms rapidly subside. In one Hospital, it is stated that this plan has been pursued, during the last ten years, in more than 100 cases, and with invariable success, a fact which will keenly impress those who know how frequently, under ordinary medical treatment, these cases progress from bad to worse. It is a point upon which much stress is laid by French physicians—and which Nurses must, therefore, remember if they are directed to carry out this system of treatment—that the temperature of the water must be maintained at about 100° F., because the object is more to relieve the lungs, so thereby relieving the skin, than to reduce the temperature by chilling the surface of the body, especially as this latter proceeding might easily be followed by the very serious results which the treatment is designed to prevent. After all, the method is very analogous to the old-fashioned plan of a hot bath with a handful of mustard in it, recommended for those who had caught a severe cold, and which, by drawing the blood to the surface of the skin, relieved the deeper organs of the body, and thus checked or prevented inflammatory conditions.

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