

## Medical Matters.

### VENTILATION.



AN interesting article on hospital construction which has just been published in an American contemporary, proposes various novelties in the arrangements of wards, and the views expressed upon ventilation are well worth consideration. Reliance upon windows for ventilation is certainly often responsible for the absence of any ventilation at all. An open window is more or less of a fallacy; in cold weather, it causes draughts; in wet weather, it admits too much moisture into the room; in windy weather, it creates a turbulent atmosphere; and in calm weather, it is usually entirely ineffective. An open fireplace again, is only a means of intermittent ventilation: In cold weather, it undoubtedly clears the atmosphere of a room, even too rapidly, because if the chimney be at all large the heat ascends, drawing any warmed air with it, and leaving the temperature of the room, beyond a small circle around the fireplace, probably even lower than that of a room where there is no such draught; while, on the other hand, the milder the weather becomes, the more ineffective are the ventilating results of the open fire.

### TEMPERANCE TINCTURES.

THE statement has often been made that no statistics can be regarded as trustworthy which are based upon the advantages of giving stimulants in medical treatment, while, at the same time, alcohol in the form of tinctures and spirits is probably being administered in the medicines to a considerable amount. In order to obviate this objection, a well-known Temperance Hospital now makes most of its tinctures by using glycerine and acetic acid instead of spirit. By this means, all trace of alcohol is kept out of the medicines and thus the results which are obtained furnish a fair basis for comparison with those gained when brandy or other stimulants are given. Unhappily, there has been a great amount of exaggeration in many of the statements hitherto published on this matter, and some temperance advocates, with the best intentions in the world, have declared that alcohol is absolutely and always unnecessary. It is this intemperance in argument which has undoubtedly alienated

some who are themselves almost total abstainers, and who rarely, if ever, prescribe alcohol for patients in the course of any ordinary illness. But there are few who can deny that in many cases of pneumonia, of typhoid, of plague, and other exhausting diseases, the free administration of alcohol may be the sheet anchor of safety, and that it will enable patients, who would otherwise die of collapse, to rally, revive, and recover.

### SNAKE CATCHING.

THE immense number of lives which are lost each year in India, and in other tropical countries, from snake bites have led various Governments to give considerable sums for each snake that is killed; so that, as a matter of fact, in India alone, there are large numbers of natives who devote their lives to killing serpents. It is, however, a curious fact that, so far as we can learn, these Governments have not hitherto offered a reward for serpents' eggs, because there can be little doubt that by so doing, the pest would be more rapidly diminished than by killing the mature animal. It is stated on excellent authority that these eggs are by no means difficult to find, that a cobra lays eighteen to twenty eggs at a time, and that, in many cases, the finding of the eggs leads to the discovery of the parent. It has been recently pointed out that venomous snakes are never met with in tobacco fields, and that a sniff of nicotine or carbolic acid will instantly kill the most powerful cobra. As methods of preventing snakes from infesting the houses of natives, it is suggested that their habitations should be surrounded by the cactus plant grown fairly close, or that the ground should be covered with fresh *kankan*—sharp fragments of limestone. The belly of the snake, being destitute of scales, is its most tender and vulnerable part, and it therefore avoids all sharp substances on the ground as carefully as hot ashes. It has been found to be useless to encourage either mongooses or the secretary bird, both of which are deadly foes to snakes, because they usually become a perfect nuisance themselves when the snakes in the district are exterminated; but inasmuch as prevention is infinitely better than cure, it would seem only common sense for Governments to reward the finding of serpent's eggs as liberally as the production of dead snakes.

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