

Medical Matters.

CHINOSOL.



THIS comparatively new preparation, which is allied to quinine, is a powerful antiseptic and disinfectant. In the treatment of foetid ulcerating wounds, a solution of 1 in 500 produces rapid and healthy healing. As a dry dressing, mixed with boracic acid or starch, the effect is the same as that of iodoform, but when the powder is employed in the pure state there is evidently a somewhat caustic effect, for the surface turns a blackish-brown colour. It is well for nurses to remember in using Chinosol for instruments that the solution must not be stronger than 1 in 2,000 parts, because, with a higher proportion, instruments are found to lose their edge, and the steel to become coated with greenish black spots, which are very difficult to remove. Instruments with white bone handles also are considerably injured, the latter becoming discoloured and roughened. There have been several cases of poisoning from chinisol in the experiments which have been made upon animals in order to ascertain the effects and safe doses of the drug; the chief symptoms being violent sneezing and coughing, and an increased flow of thick, ropy saliva, a low temperature, loss of power in the lower limbs, and then collapse and death. So the drug evidently requires to be used with considerable precautions, and only in a very diluted condition, when it is employed as an external application. It does not appear to be agreed yet, what doses and preparations may be administered internally.

"PHOSSY JAW."

THIS is the popular name given to a disease which was formerly prevalent, but which is fortunately, nowadays, rarely met with. In former times, matches were made almost entirely with yellow phosphorus, which gives off fumes of the vapour at the ordinary temperature of the air which, therefore, were perforce inhaled by matchmakers and packers. It possesses a peculiar corroding effect upon the bony tissues, and when the vapour entered the mouth of anyone suffering from a decayed tooth, or even if the enamel upon the tooth

was defective, the phosphorus attacked the bone beneath and caused its necrosis or death. Then the disease set up suppuration around it, and the formation of an abscess, which continued to discharge until surgery stepped in and removed the dead tissue, or the patient died of exhaustion or blood-poisoning. These cases were signalled by one remarkable appearance. In the dark—the patient's breath being strongly impregnated with phosphorus—he seemed to be breathing out fire from his mouth, and, by this sign, cases formerly were easily diagnosed. Some years ago, regulations were made to ensure every possible precaution against this terrible disease. Red phosphorus, which is less poisonous than the yellow variety, became more usually employed. Special care was taken that the matchmakers and packers should work in cool, well-ventilated rooms, so that the air might be as little impregnated with the fumes as possible. The workers were specially enjoined to wash their hands most carefully, before touching their food, and the frequent employment of strong antiseptic solutions for the teeth, and frequent and careful inspection of their condition were insisted upon. In consequence of these precautions, this terrible disease is now comparatively rare, but the law wisely requires that every case shall be notified to a factory inspector, so that precautions may be taken to prevent the occurrence of any further cases. Recently, attention has been called to an inquest upon a boy who died from this disease, and who was employed at a well-known match factory. Strong comments were made upon the fact that the firm did not notify the case, and that their medical officer did not certify the cause of death as phosphorus necrosis. The out-cry, however, was not altogether just, because, as a matter of fact, the diagnosis of this now comparatively rare disease is, especially in its early stages, difficult to make; and it therefore is unfair to tax a medical man, who might quite easily fail to recognise the nature of the disease, with having deliberately withheld the proper diagnosis from the notice of the authorities. At any rate, the protection which the law now provides, in order to lessen the risks of workers in phosphorus, has been of the utmost value and importance to that large class; and no one can object if further and even more stringent regulations are made, if they will have the effect of altogether preventing the occurrence of this disease in future.

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