

Medical Matters.

BULLET WOUNDS.



THE knowledge of military surgeons, especially with regard to the results produced by modern projectiles, has been immensely increased during the last eighteen months. The facts communicated to the medical societies by surgeons, who served through the Turko-Greek war, showed very conclusively that the old nickel-pointed cartridge, with its great velocity, might pass completely through the body without being felt by the injured individual. We noticed, at the time, the case which was reported of a donkey, through whose abdomen a shot completely passed, whilst the animal was standing up feeding, and without causing it to exhibit the slightest pain or even surprise. So it was found in many cases, that soldiers were shot through the body while charging the enemy, and still rushed on. The consideration of such facts led to the manufacture in India of what is now called the Dum-Dum bullet, the nickel point of the ordinary cartridge being removed, so that when the projectile entered the body, the soft lead top flattened out and formed a great splash of metal in the tissues. The first result was great and immediate shock, which made the injured soldier fall. In the Egyptian campaign, we learn that this effect was still more strikingly proved. In the case of the Dervish charge at Omdurman, the fanatics who formerly were able to rush the British squares, were this time disabled at a considerable distance from our ranks. Finally, an interesting paper, concerning the experiences of military surgeons in Cuba, illustrates the same facts. Men shot through the abdomen by the ordinary Mauser bullet walked several miles, arriving at the hospital apparently in good condition, and finally recovered without any operation being necessary. It is stated that men were even wounded in the liver or the kidney by the passage of such a bullet without serious after-consequences; and that in several instances the "Mauser bullet even passed through the skull without causing any apparent injury to the brain"—several soldiers so wounded returning to duty in a few days. A well-known American surgeon has stated the

remarkable fact that in eight instances the bullet struck the thigh over the femoral artery, so that it would appear that the vessel must have been penetrated, but, as a matter of fact, the artery seemed in each case to have been pushed aside, instead of perforated by the bullet. The results were that the wounds of the Spanish soldiers, in many instances, healed incredibly fast. On the other hand, it is said that the Spaniards used a cartridge with the lead point exposed, so that on impact the latter expanded and formed the ghastly wound known to be produced by the Dum-Dum bullets. It is a most interesting fact that only the simplest antiseptics were used in the Cuban campaign. Iodoform, and other powerful drugs were found to produce so great a degree of irritation that their use was abandoned. Despite the tropical climate, and the insanitary conditions which characterised the whole campaign, it is, at least, remarkable that no case of tetanus appears to have occurred; whereas, previous campaigns; especially in hot climates, are known to have been attended by a remarkable frequency of this condition, subsequent to gunshot wounds.

DRINKING TOO LITTLE.

THERE is an old story of an ascetic priest who expressed his sorrow to an inebriate that the latter drank too much, and who, in his turn, expressed in simple Saxon, his regret that the priest ate too little. As a matter of fact, many people, now-a-days, and especially women, do not take sufficient fluids. It is astonishing to find, when it is accurately measured, that some people drink little more than one pint in the twenty-four hours. The result is that their tissues gradually become dried up, the blood sucks up all the fluid it requires, leaving, in these cases, very little to lubricate the internal economy, or flush the excretory organs. Water is the great solvent of the waste acids formed in the body, and if these are not dissolved, and so washed out of the system, they accumulate in the tissues and set up more or less painful disease, especially gout and rheumatism; whilst the same want of fluidity causes the deposit of stones in the gall bladder and the kidneys. It is an excellent general rule, therefore, that an adult should take at least three pints of fluid each day, in order to maintain that moisture of the tissues which is requisite to health.

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