

## Medical Matters.

### LIKE TO LIKE.



The successful treatment of myxœdema by doses of the thyroid gland has very naturally caused experiments to be made as to the therapeutic effects of extracts of other organs upon diseases of those organs in the human subject. A valuable paper has just been published containing observations on the action of the brain of the sheep upon patients afflicted with insanity and nerve disease. One teaspoonful of a preparation of this organ made with glycerine, was administered by the mouth three times a day. On the whole, the cases appear to have been of a severe type, and the results, for the most part, were negative. Of the three exceptions upon whom appreciable effects were produced, the following was perhaps the most markedly affected by the treatment. "She was a married woman, aged 36, who had been in the asylum for two years and three months." "She had ceased to speak for at least a year, sat with her mouth pursed up, looking fixedly on the ground, did no work and paid no attention to anything going on around." "On the third day after the medicine was commenced, the patient became decidedly more active in mind." This improvement in due course passed into excitability, which, after the medicine was discontinued, culminated in an act of violence—the breaking of several panes of glass. Now, of course, this may not have been due to the medicine at all; but, presuming that it was, it is impossible not to feel more respect for mutton than is customarily accorded to it, if the sheep's brain can have such an effect upon a demented human being. It might be conjectured that the cerebral substance of an animal higher in the scale might possess more potent properties, and the brains of monkeys, for example, might prove efficacious in cases where the organs of sheep did not succeed. The experiments on this matter, inconclusive as they have hitherto been, have at least been sufficient to suggest that the brain tissue contains some chemical constituent which may exercise a direct effect upon the nervous system of human beings in certain circumstances. It will probably not be long before more precise knowledge on this subject leads to more detailed investigations and more instructive results.

### THE EXCISION OF CARBUNCLES.

This is a method of treatment which is both theoretically and practically good, and it is so rapidly growing in professional favour that it will probably soon supersede the ordinary expectant

procedure. The ordinary course of the disease, if unchecked, is the slow formation of abscess with brawny induration of the surrounding tissues, and rapid failure in the health and strength of the patient. Poultices and ointments can only hasten the maturation of the former and delay the latter; but in the most favourable cases, when a free incision has at last been made, the discharge may be long continued, and convalescence will probably be tedious and prolonged. By the new treatment all this is saved, because, as soon as the diagnosis is established, the patient is put under an anæsthetic and a free incision made all round the disease, and then beneath it, completely removing it, and leaving only a healthy surface to close by granulations, which, in ordinary cases, would take about a fortnight. The temperature, moreover, falls at once to normal, and the strength is effectually economised.

### MIDWIVES' REGISTRATION.

An Association has been formed for the alleged purpose of obtaining united action amongst medical men in support of legislation on this subject. We can only express our belief that the promoters of this new body can have no accurate knowledge of the strong feeling which exists on the matter throughout their profession, and that their efforts in this direction are foredoomed to failure, and will only bring discredit upon themselves. Everyone agrees that the necessity for reform amongst Midwives is urgent, and that these ignorant, uncontrolled women do an immensity of harm. But here agreement ends, because one section urges that an Act of Parliament should be passed placing these women's names on a State Register. What earthly good would be accomplished by such a measure, few people would attempt to explain; but anyone can see what harm would be done. The practice of these ignorant and dangerous practitioners would be legalised; and the necessity for caution and carefulness on their part, which now exists, would be removed, with results to the poor which can easily be surmised. As a matter of fact, those who are thus striving to resuscitate Midwives are fighting against the inevitable. Midwives, in the old acceptance of the word, are dying out, and long before an Act of Parliament is obtained for their Registration, they will have ceased to exist. Medical men, and well-trained obstetric nurses working under their control and supervision, are now ousting the Midwife all over the country, and from many districts in which she formerly attended all the poor, she has now altogether disappeared. We are sorry, therefore, to see medical men attempting to bolster up this bad and obsolete system, and we feel sure they cannot be aware of the bitter personal feeling which they are arousing against themselves amongst a large section of their professional brethren.

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