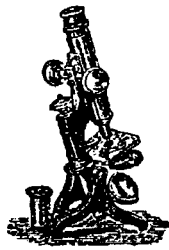


Medical Matters.

THE PROSPECTIVE LIFE OF TRIPLETS.



It is a well ascertained fact that triplets are rarely reared, and considering that, as an almost invariable rule, they are defectively developed when born, it is hardly a matter for surprise that they should be unable to withstand the difficulties and dangers of infant life. Should any of our readers be in attendance when a threefold birth occurs it will be well for them to remember that the infants should, therefore, be treated, just as prematurely born, but viable, babies are cared for. The great requisite is extra warmth, and this end is best procured by wrapping them up in cotton wool as soon as they have been washed. The coming of age of triplets at a village in Warwickshire, recently, was an event which proves the general rule as to the slender hold that triplets have upon life, because there are very few of such cases upon record. Dr. Merriman inquired into the matter very carefully, and only collected four instances in which triplets reach adult life. The *Lancet* states that a case of quadruplets is also on record where all four children were born alive, and were reared, being three males and one female, and the latter herself, in due course, become the mother of triplets.

CEREBRAL TUMOURS.

It is only within the last few years that the advances which have been made in the localization of brain disease have made the diagnosis of new growths within the skull a matter of accurate knowledge, while, coincidentally, the splendid successes of brain surgery have made some of them at least less hopeless than heretofore. The chief symptoms and sign hitherto relied upon have been headache and vomiting, and inflammation of the optic nerve; but according to Dr. Ashby, of Manchester, an early and frequent symptom of tumours in the cerebellum, to which sufficient attention has not been given, is the occurrence of internal strabismus or turning of the eye towards the nose. Here, then, is a symptom which our readers would do well to watch for, and carefully note in any cerebral cases which come under their care. In fact, for the proper diagnosis of these cases, the assistance of a careful and accurately observant Nurse is invaluable. Sight, hearing, taste, and touch become temporarily disordered in these patients, oftentimes, long before any permanent change is noted, and, like other premonitory symptoms, they are much more likely to occur in the long intervals between, rather than the brief times during, the doctor's visits. Another practical point of much importance for Nurses to remember is that patients suffering from growths within the skull often die suddenly from failure of respiration, either with, or more commonly without, a "fit."

THE TREATMENT OF EPILEPSY.

There is a curious cycle of fashion in the use of drugs. While every one is glad to try new and approved remedies, most of which have their day, and disappear into the limbo of forgotten things, standard medicines rise and fall in professional favour. Many years ago, for example, epilepsy used to be treated by nitrate of silver and with some success. But the long continuance of this metal causes some degree of discolouration of the skin, a fact which came to the ears of a popular novelist of the day, who forthwith afflicted his next hero with this disease in order that he might be subjected to this treatment, and so became perfectly blue—whereon the story turned. A public dread of silver at once arose, exactly as twenty years before every one became afraid of mercury; but the latter has quite recovered its position, and there are not wanting signs that the silver salts may soon again be in the ascendant, doubtless to the joy of those wonderful people, the bimetalists. Meanwhile, so far as epilepsy is concerned, another remedy, in the shape of borax, is once more being extensively recommended and tried in cases of this disease. There is no doubt that the drug answers well in some cases, where the ordinary specific—bromide of potassium—cannot be tolerated, but on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that borax has other qualities which the potash salt does not possess, and which renders it unsuitable for many cases occurring in women.

PREMATURE DISEASE.

Whether it be that civilization is advancing too rapidly as some assert, or that the English race is getting played out, as certain neighbours asseverate, or whatever the cause may be, one fact is certainly becoming sufficiently marked to deserve very careful attention, even if we cannot give it a satisfactory explanation. Diseases which are due to degenerative changes are undoubtedly becoming not only of greater frequency, but occur at much younger ages than used to be the case. The writer, who has had considerable opportunities of arriving at the facts, is confident that cancer, for example, is much more frequently found now between the ages of 30 and 40 than was the case fifteen years ago. He does not offer any explanation, but merely states a fact based upon a large number of cases. So again with ovarian disease. The classical records of Sir Spencer Wells and others, showed that the average age of patients with ovarian cyst, was about 42 years. Now-a-days, it is by no means unusual to find the disease in much younger patients, and recently in a French journal, which we quote to prove that the deterioration of race, if any, is not confined to these islands, three cases were reported in which ovarian cysts were removed from children aged 10 and 12 years, and in which one was found in a child less than a year old, who had died from other causes.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)