

Medical Matters.

APPARENT DEATH.



AN interesting case has recently been recorded in which a woman who had been ill for some length of time, and appeared to be gradually getting worse, seemed to die one morning at 2.30 a.m. Her body became cold and stiff, her jaw dropped, she did not open her eyes, she did not breathe, and her heart apparently ceased beating. After remaining in this condition for an hour and a-half, and being considered by all to be dead, she was dressed in the customary grave clothes. Friends, during the morning, came to see her, and all considered that she was dead. An undertaker measured her body and also believed this to be the case, but about 10.30 a.m. she coughed and gradually began to breathe again, and the pulse returned. Being removed to a warm bed she gradually recovered, spoke in a whisper, and was evidently conscious. She then again became gradually weaker and died at 7 a.m. the following morning—that is to say, twenty-eight hours after the supposed death—in exactly the same attitude, and showing the same appearance as on the previous occasion. This time, however, she was seen by a doctor and the fact of death verified. Cases like this one have, from time to time, occurred which have led to the popular belief that some persons have been buried while living, and such instances prove the importance of the occurrence of death being always certified, after actual inspection of the body, by a qualified medical man. This is undoubtedly a measure which might be adopted with much advantage, and which, for many years, has been enforced by law in France and other countries.

THE AMERICAN MIDWIFE.

THE medical profession in the United States are considering the question of midwives, as it is already receiving attention in this country. A well-known professor of obstetrics recently stated that it would be futile to attempt to give an adequate description of the average midwife, but that "to give an approximate representation," he would say that she was an "illiterate and in the vast majority of instances, a superannuated, decrepit old negress, benightedly superstitious, without precept or guide, with nought to recommend her but the fact of having served in the capacity of nurse in a lying-in chamber, and having thus to her own satisfaction acquired what, by the physician, is only achieved

after years of careful study—the knowledge essential to the proper management of the parturient." Such a description of women entrusted with such grave responsibilities raises the most serious questions, but as a matter of fact comparatively few cases of labour amongst white women are attended in the United States by these women on their own account, as they are under the necessity of summoning medical assistance, for their own protection, if the case does not end quickly and satisfactorily.

PERNICIOUS ANÆMIA.

ONE of the most difficult class of cases to treat is that to which this term has been given, and in which the anæmia is extreme, without there being any evident disease to account for it. Although various observers have shown that in some of these cases there is a marked destruction of the cells of the bone marrow, it has not been proved conclusively that this may not be a consequence rather than a cause of the disease. It is, however, interesting to observe that in America some patients have been treated with more or less marked success by the administration of bone marrow, which is taken from the long bones, and administered even to the amount of three or four ounces a-day. It is usual to employ the anterior extremities of calves' ribs just posterior to their junction with the costal cartilages, though probably any other cancellated tissue would do as well. The ribs are comminuted and covered with glycerine, after a week's maceration, in which, with occasional stirring, the resulting fluid is filtered through flannel. The product is a bright red fluid, which is found to contain hæmoglobin in large quantities, and of this two drachms are given after each meal. The raw marrow, to the extent of two or three ounces, has been given, but in some instances was found to cause so much stomach disturbance that it could not be tolerated.

REST AFTER MEALS.

IT is a curious fact how the advance of medical science is bringing us back to various popular proverbs of two hundred years ago, when, for example, "After dinner rest awhile, after supper walk a mile," was an accepted rule of life, and when people, after the heavy noon-day meal, were convinced that they would suffer from indigestion unless they rested; and that they would be subject to "nightmares" unless they took some active exercise before going to bed. One of the points of cardinal importance upon which dietarians now insist, is that a most common cause of dyspepsia is active mental or bodily exercise directly after the chief meal of the day.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)