

## Medical Matters.

### UNUSUAL OVARIAN TUMOUR.



A CASE which has been recently reported, illustrates the extreme size and weight to which an ovarian tumour may attain, and the comparatively early age at which such growths may appear. The patient in question was a girl only 16 years old, who for two years had noticed a gradual enlargement of the abdomen, which for six months before her operation had become so large that she had been almost entirely bedridden. The greatest girth of the abdomen was 54½ inches, *i.e.*, not far short of the patient's height. The tumour proved to be a multilocular cyst of the ovary, and weighed between eighty and ninety pounds, the patient's own weight a week after the operation being under the same amount. The patient recovered well from the operation; a fact which once more proves that few abdominal tumours are too serious for modern surgery to grapple with.

### TUBAL PREGNANCY.

In a certain small percentage of cases, pregnancy occurs in the Fallopian tube, and not in the cavity of the uterus. In such cases, the gradual development of the foetus causes a simultaneous stretching of the walls of the usually narrow canal, and after a certain time this distension becomes so great that rupture of the tube takes place. Then violent peritonitis may be set up, or the loss of blood from the rupture of the vessels in the tube may cause the patient's speedy death. These cases formerly were not recognised, and many a patient died suddenly in whom the cause of the fatality was only discovered at the *post-mortem* examination. But, at the present time, the history and physical signs of this accident are so well understood that the condition is usually diagnosed at an early date. It is urged by many authorities that, when this abnormal pregnancy is discovered, an operation should be performed at once, in order to prevent the inevitable rupture and the consequent danger to the patient's life. On the other hand, some experts argue that the life of the child must also be considered, and that in a comparatively few cases the thickening which is set up around the tube enables the development of the foetus to proceed until it has reached the seventh or eighth month, and is therefore viable, that is to say, able to maintain an independent existence. So they contend that such patients should be kept at

perfect rest, and carefully dieted, until this period of pregnancy has been reached; and that then an operation may be accomplished with comparatively little extra danger, and probably with the saving of the child's life. The general balance of opinion, however, is that the continuance of the distension of the tube implies an ever present danger to the mother, and one, therefore, which should be removed as speedily as possible, seeing that it is impossible to predict at what moment rupture may take place, or how speedily a fatal result may follow upon that accident. The operation consists of the removal of the tube and ovary, and is more difficult, as a rule, than the more usual operation of oöphorectomy. But the Nursing of the patient after both operations is usually precisely similar.

### THE SCOURGE OF ST. KILDA.

At the present day, the occurrence of lock-jaw or tetanus amongst new-born children is comparatively rare; formerly it was the cause of an immense mortality. About 130 years ago an account was given of a visit to the Island of St. Kilda; the visitor stating that the infants on this island were usually attacked about the seventh day of life by a convulsive affection, in which their gums were so tightly clenched together that it was impossible to get anything down their throats. Soon after this they were seized with convulsive fits, and died on the following day. So general was this affection, even until recent times, that the mothers never thought of making any preparation for the coming baby, and it was wrapped in a dirty piece of blanket until the ninth or tenth day, when, if the child by any accident survived, the affection of the mother asserted itself. Investigation showed that the neglect to dress the umbilical cord, the carelessness concerning the infant's welfare, and the general insanitary condition of the dwellings, caused the blood poisoning. Dressing the cord at once with iodiform powder and antiseptic wool, keeping the child clean and feeding it properly, were found to completely prevent the occurrence of tetanus, and in consequence the infant death-rate, it is stated, has been greatly reduced.

### THE THERMOMETER IN PHTHISIS.

THE difficulty of diagnosing consumption in its early stages which formerly was very great, has in recent years been lessened by the more ready means now available of discovering the fragments of lung tissue in the expectoration, or the presence of the tubercle bacillus. Still further assistance is now suggested by the fact that a definite daily rise of temperature has been discovered to be a preliminary symptom in cases of tuberculosis, and careful observers have

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)