

## Medical Matters.

### PHOSPHORUS IN OYSTERS.



It has long been known that oysters contain a considerable quantity of phosphate of lime, and many medical men recommend the succulent bivalve for this reason to invalids. Especially if they be convalescing from diseases which have greatly depressed their nervous system, phosphorus is thus administered in a pleasant and easily assimilable form. Some observations upon the subject have recently been made in France; and it has been shown that, on the average, a dozen Portuguese oysters contain no less than fifteen grains of phosphate of lime; about a third less being obtained from French oysters. An investigation into the constituents of our English "natives" would, therefore, be both interesting and important, and, at any rate, the presence of this important nerve constituent furnishes an additional explanation of the dietetic usefulness of the oyster.

### INTUBATION.

ATTENTION has recently been called, in a French contemporary, to a danger not unusually met with in children upon whom the operation of intubation has been performed. The difficulty of fixing the tube introduced into the larynx is sometimes of course very great, and four cases are narrated in which the child, by some means or other, had loosened the tube in its throat, and then swallowed it. The tubes are usually made of metal; and, therefore, can do no harm except by their mechanical effect on the walls of the stomach and intestines. It is, therefore, possible that the tube might be passed without any serious results following this accident. But in two of the cases narrated, and in which the children died from diphtheria, the tube was found in the intestinal canal. Two of the children passed the tube—one in two days, and the other in three. In neither of the two cases who died, was there any signs of ulceration set up by the mechanical pressure of the instrument. It is an interesting point to remember that, since the introduction of the plan of treating diphtheria patients in a vapour room, the number of cases in which it has been found necessary to practice intubation or tracheotomy has greatly diminished.

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### TRACHEOTOMY IN CHILDREN.

A VALUABLE paper on this subject was recently published in a medical contemporary. Twenty-five cases were discussed in detail; twenty-one of which were operated upon for croup or diphtheria, and of these eleven—that is to say, just more than a half—were cured. Of eight patients under two years, only one recovered, and this one was suffering from a scald of the larynx. The great mortality of the disease in children under two years of age is well exemplified by these figures. On the other hand, out of sixteen operations on children more than two years of age, no less than thirteen recovered. As an evidence of the large number of cases of diphtheria, in which the operation of tracheotomy is requisite, it is interesting to note that in nine years there were admitted into the General Hospital at Hanover 1,510 cases of diphtheria, of which 1,000 required tracheotomy. Whenever an epidemic of scarlet fever exists at the same time as an epidemic of diphtheria, it has been frequently noted that the mortality of the latter disease is greatly above the average. When diphtheria patients are attacked by pneumonia, the mortality again becomes very serious and, as a general rule, when tracheotomy is deferred until the last moment, the recoveries are much fewer than when it is performed before the child's strength is exhausted and its breathing power has become materially impaired.

### EXTRACTS OF MALT.

WITH the approach of cold weather, the question once more arises as to the best forms of nutritive medicines for patients suffering from dyspeptic, pulmonary, or wasting disorders. Amongst these, cod-liver oil and extracts of malt take the chief place, because of their great power not only in building up the body, and especially in forming fat and nervous tissue, but also in aiding the digestion of food. Some invalids, for example, are quite unable to take starchy matters, because of their inability to convert these into the chemical substances which can be assimilated by the tissues. Amongst the many forms of these remedies, the well-founded claims of the preparations of the Standard Malt Extract Company deserve to be emphasised. They are valuable because of the special amount of *diastase* which they contain, and which is the most active known digestive of starchy matters. They are additionally useful from the fact that even those with which cod-liver oil are mixed are free from the harsh or sickly flavour of many similar preparations. This point is often overlooked in ordering Extract of Malt, but it is all important, as most Nurses know, in persuading the patient to swallow it.

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