


Medical Matters.**FEVER EPIDEMICS.**


THE problem of providing proper accommodation for an unknown and constantly varying number of fever patients is one of the most difficult with which sanitarians are faced in London, at the present time. The immensity of the metropolis and the constantly increasing number of those who live within its borders, inevitably tend to prevent the complete organisation of any system of isolation from infectious fevers. And, consequently, at one time of the year there may be a number of beds standing empty in the fever Hospitals, whereas, at other times, patients are refused wholesale, because every available bed is occupied. It is more than a mere question of providing a sufficient number of rooms with bedsteads and bedding, for the reception of fever patients. The real difficulty lies in the provision of a sufficient staff of attendants upon the sick; because it is clear that the doctors and nurses, for example, who would be needed during a great epidemic of disease, would not be required during ordinary times; and, while, it would not be justifiable that public authorities should maintain and pay workers for whom there is no work, it is equally indisputable that skilled workers cannot be always found when a sudden emergency demands their assistance. The suggestion which has been thrown out in these columns, to meet this difficulty, is probably one which, in the main, will prove to be the ultimate solution of a great and ever recurring problem. But, at present, the metropolis is once more suffering from an epidemic of fever which, largely in consequence of the deficient Hospital accommodation, and, therefore, of the impossibility of properly isolating the patients, is rapidly invading and extending in every district.

CREASOTE.

A NEW method of employing this powerful antiseptic has recently been introduced into Germany, where a large number of cases of blood-poisoning have been treated by hypodermic injections of the drug. It has been found that, in such cases, even when the temperature was 104° and the pulse 140, an injection of creasote was followed by a rapid fall of the temperature to normal, while the pulse decreased in proportion. Patients who seemed to be extremely ill and in whom three injections of creasote a day were the chief treatment employed, recovered perfectly. Apparently, no serious consequences were caused either locally

or generally by the injection, and certainly the results obtained are so important that it is probable that the drug will be more largely employed in this form than has hitherto been the case. A curious fact in connection with these results is that it is more than doubtful if creasote possesses any direct destructive effect upon the more virulent bacteria, and certainly the bacilli of tubercle are comparatively little affected by its action.

THE OWNERSHIP OF A TOOTH.

A CURIOUS case has recently been tried in a French Court of Law. A gentleman, after suffering for a considerable time from toothache, consulted a dentist, who extracted the offending member. Apparently it was a somewhat unusual and interesting specimen, because the operator expressed his intention of preserving it and placing it in his collection of curiosities. To this, however, the original owner of the tooth objected, claiming it as his own property. The dentist, on the other hand, urged that as it was an article which he found in his forceps, and which was clearly without an owner, he was entitled to take and keep it. He therefore insisted upon retaining it, so the original possessor lodged a claim of fraudulent appropriation against the dentist. To this, that gentleman replied that there could be no fraud, seeing that the plaintiff had, on his own showing, requested him to remove it from his permanent possession—that is to say, from his mouth. The case finally came before the Law Courts, and has aroused such learned arguments for, and against, the possession of that tooth, that its ownership remains still in suspense, and there seems to be actually a legal question whether a person's teeth really do belong to himself once they have left his mouth. It will be interesting to learn the sequel of this case when the Judges have finally arrived at an agreement on the subject.

CURIOUS ERUPTIONS.

THERE are certain drugs which are well known to produce rashes on the skin closely simulating those of scarlet fever and other infectious complaints, and which, indeed, are only distinguished from the latter by the fact that, as a rule, the temperature is not raised. Belladonna, for example, produces in many people a scarlet rash, almost indistinguishable from that of scarlet fever. Salicylic acid and its compounds often produce a similar rash, although this rather resembles the eruption of urticaria. Phenacetin is often followed by a rash, although this is usually too patchy in character to be mistaken for scarlet fever, and copaiba also, in many people, has a similar effect. And, finally, in many people, the use of enemata is followed by a rose-red eruption.

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