

Medical Matters.**EPIDEMIC HYSTERIA.**

THIS title has been given to the latest outbreak of disease reported from New York, which in various ways teaches very valuable lessons. The facts, as reported, are briefly that in several of the largest girls' schools in that city a number of the scholars suffered from convulsions of a typically hysterical character, and from delusions—mostly connected with visions of evil spirits. The outbreak, it is stated, commenced by the statement made by a little girl "that she had seen the Devil." How she recognised the Prince of Darkness we are not told, but the story spread so fast that within a very few days a large number of other girls, according to their own evidence, also saw him. Nothing is so contagious as Fear; and the young ladies of New York—living in the most enervating surroundings, martyrs from their cradles to dyspepsia and the hundred pains which arise from mal-nutrition—probably offer an unequalled field for the observation of specialists in nerve disorders. Probably the absolute disregard of all dietetic rules, exhibited by all classes of Americans, is the abiding cause of much of the ill-health from which they suffer. The manner in which children who are barely able to walk are introduced into "Society," and are stuffed morning, noon and night with pastry, ices and sweets, is only one degree less foolish than the method by which American boys and men destroy their livers by the incessant consumption of more or less adulterated alcohol under such appropriate names as "corpse-revivers" and "cock-tails." Fortunately for the United States, the women are taking an active part now in the many good agencies at work, both for spreading temperance and inculcating common-sense views concerning exercise and diet. The beneficial results of their crusade are already becoming apparent, and there is reason to hope that, with a more healthy system of educating and feeding the children, such an epidemic as that to which reference has been made may not occur again. But it is impossible to expect healthy minds in unhealthy bodies; and in communities where the laws of health are violated, Nature will be avenged.

SCORPION STINGS.

IN many Eastern countries, and especially in India, to be stung by a scorpion is one of the most common accidents of daily life. The pain caused by the puncture is sometimes extreme, and in rare instances, in delicate women and children, has proved fatal. It is therefore interesting to learn that an English surgeon, who has had great experience in the treatment of these cases, always applies honey to the wound, and finds this remedy almost invariably gives immediate relief. When honey is not obtainable, a syrup made by putting sugar into water, and using this as an outward application, often secures the same effect. The surgeon in question narrates the following typical case:—

"A delicate middle-aged woman, who was suffering from heart disease, was stung by one of the black kind, a huge monster with formidable claws and a big sting. She was carried to his bungalow in great agony, cold and clammy, and begged of him to relieve her of the intense pain which, she said, she could bear no longer. There was a large gathering in his place at the time, including two of the profession. He immediately brought the honey, which he applied gently but freely over the affected part. The relief was almost instantaneous, to the astonishment of the patient and the spectators, particularly the physicians. At the same time, he gave her ten minims of chlorodyne with brandy, which roused her spirits within a short time. He applied the honey again after an interval of five minutes, when the patient expressed herself nearly rid of the pain, and comfortable. She went home walking, much happier in mind and body."

This reminds us of the South African treatment for severe burns, to which we have, on more than one occasion referred, in these columns—the immediate application of treacle to the burnt surface. As we have pointed out, and as several of our readers have since proved for themselves, the application is followed, even in the most severe cases, by an almost immediate relief from pain. And what is equally satisfactory, the application can be left on for some days, during which healing rapidly takes place. It is quite evident, therefore, that sugar possesses not only some antiseptic properties, but also the power of relieving local pain. It is probable that its use could be widely extended in this direction.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)