

## Medical Matters.



### NIGHT SWEATS.

THIS is one of the most distressing symptoms of diseases in which the patient's strength is rapidly exhausted, and it therefore occurs with special frequency in those suffering from Consumption. The patient often wakens, bathed in cold perspiration, and with the nightdress, and even the bedclothes, saturated with moisture. Sometimes, if neglected, this causes the body to become severely chilled, and thus the patient may suffer from some intercurrent form of inflammation. It is a constant difficulty to check these profuse perspirations, and thus to save the patient's strength. Until recently, amongst the many drugs employed for this purpose, the sulphate of atropia—the alkaloid of belladonna—has probably given the best results. Very often one-fiftieth of a grain of this drug, given at night, will afford not only restful sleep, but also freedom from the perspiration; and, after a few nights the effect, in many cases, appears to be permanent. A French physician has recently been administering tellurate of soda for this complaint, and claims that the effect is most marked and complete. An important drawback, however, which the drug seems to possess, is that it gives the breath of the patient a garlic-like odour, which is sometimes strongly resented; and as it appears that, in some cases, the drug also causes some digestive disturbance, it is not likely that it will replace atropia in the treatment of this troublesome complaint.

### ADDISON'S DISEASE.

IT is generally admitted that the chief cause which gives rise to the symptoms grouped together under this name is tubercular disease of the supra-renal bodies; and for some years past it has been suggested that the disease, which has otherwise appeared to be incurable, might be relieved by the removal of those organs. Considerable interest, therefore, attaches to a recent article in a German medical journal in which the results following this operation are carefully discussed. It has been proved that the removal of these organs

in animals appears to produce a species of poisoning, and the blood in such animals exhibits markedly poisonous properties. When only one organ is taken away, no bad results appear to follow; but if nearly all of both glands are removed the animals die in a few weeks from gradual wasting. From this fact, it is argued that the organs must exercise a powerful influence upon the general nutrition of the body. It has been found that in a healthy organ a peculiar substance exists which probably accounts for the discoloration of the skin which takes place in Addison's disease; because when exposed to the air this substance turns brown. So, if it gain admission into the blood, and thus becomes oxidized, it is easy to understand that it may cause pigmentation of the skin. However, one important discovery has practically followed these experiments, namely, that the administration to a patient, suffering from Addison's disease, of portions of healthy supra-renal bodies may lead to a marked improvement in his general health. It is, therefore, possible that better methods in the preparation of this substance may lead to more curative results being secured in future.

### LEPROSY.

TWO important cases in India have recently been published in which well-marked leprosy was treated by the administration of thyroid glands. One patient was a Mussulman, the other a Hindu, and in both the ulceration typical of the disease was checked and cured during the continuance of the treatment, the skin becoming soft and supple and the general health very greatly improved. The treatment was continued for about four months in each case, and varied in quantity from half a thyroid gland up to two glands each day. Two years later, both patients were seen again, and it was found that in neither of them had the disease advanced during the interval. In other diseases of a tubercular type and in other skin affections, somewhat contradictory results have been obtained from this method of treatment; and it goes without saying that comparatively little reliance can be placed on the effect apparently secured in only two instances. Still the cases are of such importance that it is well that further trials should be made of the remedy, and in India the medical profession have abundant opportunities for such an investigation.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)