

Medical Matters.

BACTERIOLOGY.



WE are constantly being asked for information on this comparatively new science, which may be said to have been born and grown up almost as a consequence of the antiseptic system: The subject is not only a vast one but must tend to become increasingly difficult as time goes on, because almost every month sees the discovery of some new form of bacterial life; and there can be little doubt that these minute organisms not only pervade all nature, but that their special actions are the special causes of certain specific diseases. An excellent little account of Bacteria has recently been published under the title of "Aid to the Study of Bacteriology," by Messrs. Ballière, Tindall and Cox, which in simple language explains the methods of cultivating, staining, examining, and distinguishing, the various *bacilli* which are at present known. It would have been an advantage if this had been accompanied by some illustrations, but these unfortunately are conspicuous by their absence. However, the information that it does give is accurate and simply explained, and therefore we would advise any nurses who desire information upon the subject to consult this little book.

THROAT BRUSHES.

ONE of our readers in Russia asks us for information concerning Throat Brushes, with special reference to the best measures to be adopted in keeping such an instrument clean. It appears that in Russia applications are usually made to the throat by means of pieces of wool attached to the end of an ordinary stick, and the system has one advantage in cases of an infectious nature, that the wool can be burnt after each application, so that all chance of conveying infection to others is thereby prevented. Indeed, for severe cases of diphtheritic, malignant, or syphilitic, sore throats or in that form which is associated with Scarlet Fever, it is obviously a great advantage if the application can be made upon such material as

wool which can be immediately afterwards destroyed. But when the ordinary throat brush is used, it is essential in all cases, however simple they may appear to be, first, that the brush shall be made quite dry so as to absorb a sufficient amount of the fluid to be applied to the throat. When this has been done, the brush should be placed, at once, under a tap of running water so as to remove the mucus, &c., which has adhered to it. Then the brush should be placed in a solution of 1 in 2,000 of perchloride of mercury, or in some equally strong antiseptic solution, so as to completely destroy any germ life which it may have taken up. After being kept in this solution for about five minutes, it should be thoroughly washed in boiling water and allowed either to remain in such a sterilised fluid covered over and protected from dust, until it is required for the next application, or carefully dried and kept in a covered metal or glass jar. And it is a golden rule, which should never be neglected, that the same brush should never be used for a second patient however carefully it may have been disinfected and cleansed.

IODOFORM CALOMEL.

A GERMAN surgeon has recently called attention to the very important results obtained by the use of a mixture of Calomel and Iodoform in the treatment of sloughing wounds, and also in patients where it is impossible to remove the whole of the diseased tissue, as, for example, in the case of tuberculous joints. The compound forms a reddish powder which possesses marked cauterising powers, as well as being very powerfully antiseptic. The application is made by merely dusting the surface, which it is desired to treat, with a little powder and covering this with sterilised gauze; this is then left on for three or four days, when a slight superficial slough is found to have separated and come away, leaving a healthy granulating surface. The preparation in question is, we believe, entirely novel, and there are undoubtedly many cases in surgery in which it will prove to be very valuable; not only in those joint cases to which reference has already been made, but also in a large number of sloughing wounds, especially those due to severe lacerations and gunshot injuries. It is especially, perhaps, in the latter that the new compound will find its greatest sphere of usefulness.

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