

**Medical Matters.****GOITRE.**

ONE of our readers has asked us to give some information respecting goitre, and especially with regard to its co-existence with heart symptoms in cases of Graves' disease. Goitre itself is merely an enlargement of the Thyroid gland—the flattened ovoid body which is found usually in an almost rudimentary state, on the front and at the sides of the windpipe just below the larynx. It is a disease which is much more prevalent in some parts of the country than in others, and at one time, especially, was so common north of the Trent that it was known as the "Derbyshire Neck." In some parts of the Continent, especially in Switzerland, it has been so frequently found associated with deficient intellect that it has become recognised as a concomitant of what is called Cretinism. In Graves' disease, however, the enlargement of the thyroid gland is associated with symptoms of nerve disturbance of a most marked character. For example, the patient usually suffers from extreme palpitation of the heart—sometimes of so violent a character that, at a distance of several feet from the patient, it is possible to hear the thumping of the organ against the walls of the chest. Together with this, there is usually associated much protrusion of the eyeballs, and sometimes to so considerable a degree as to be an actual deformity, and to render the patient's condition so noticeable that it can be diagnosed at a glance. Graves' disease is more common in women than in men; many cases appear to improve very considerably under treatment which is directed to the strengthening of the nervous system, and to the improvement of the bodily health. In these cases, palpitation rarely appears until the enlargement of the thyroid gland has become evident, and it is probable that the former symptom is to a large extent due to pressure upon, and to the irritation of, the nerves supplying and controlling the heart which is caused by the new growth. The nursing of these patients is often very difficult, because not only are they as a rule extremely irritable, but until the disease has progressed very far they are able to move about, and usually

resent any attempt to persuade them to avoid excitement, and to live quietly.

**SELF-MEDICATION.**

THERE is too much reason to fear that some comparatively recent drugs are, to a considerable extent, taking the place formerly occupied by Chloral, and even by Opium. A large number of women, especially in France, appear to have adopted the pernicious habit of drugging themselves with Antipyrin, while others again are indulging to an equally detrimental extent in frequent doses of Cocaine. It is therefore important that it should be understood that neither of these drugs are at all safe. Especially after antipyrin, dangerous symptoms are developed, varying from a simple attack of nausea, to a very severe form of syncope, or even collapse. It is by no means infrequent for a dose of antipyrin to be followed by a rose-red rash closely resembling that of scarlatina; while there are cases on record in which unconsciousness and convulsions have been caused by even small doses of the drug. The effects therefore of antipyrin, both on the skin and nervous system, are so powerful that it must be regarded as a most dangerous practice for patients to dose themselves with this medicine. In the case of Cocaine the consequences are even more dangerous, and the practice, there is unfortunately much reason to fear, is even more prevalent. Its effect on the nervous system is so great that fatal results more rapidly follow its abuse, and so the habit cannot be so prolonged.

**INSECTS IN SURGERY.**

SOME few weeks ago we quoted, from a contemporary, a description of the manner in which both in Greece and Brazil a species of ant was employed to hold and keep the edges of wounds together. A distinguished Greek surgeon has written to inform us that every modern method of surgery is employed in his country by qualified medical men; and we can well imagine that this is the case from all we have heard of their skill and success in treating the wounded. It is evident that our contemporary must have been referring to some "old-wife's" custom, and that the allusion should not have been to any recognised procedure on the part of any skilled practitioner in surgery.

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