

Medical Matters.

THE MOSAIC LAWS.



It is a very strange fact how sanitary science has merely revived the old Mosaic laws of health. The marvellous precepts which the ancient lawgiver laid down concerning the principles of public hygiene are really the basis of the most modern enactments. With reference to such important matters as the marriage of kindred, the wisdom of the Mosaic ordinances has been recognised in every country and through every age; and there are even many who, for the sake of the community, would go further than those laws went, and would prohibit marriage between cousins. With regard to the situation of cemeteries, the time of burial, and the isolation of the sick, it must be recognised that the ancient Jews were, from a hygienic standpoint, better governed than the majority of European nations at the present day. It is also beyond dispute that the Mosaic regulations as to the slaughtering of animals and the methods of preparing food are of the highest importance in the prevention of disease; for example, they probably explain the well-known immunity of the Jewish race from such diseases as trichinosis and hydatids, and even their comparative immunity from tuberculosis. In fact, the latter regulations are even more advanced than those in force in this country at the present day; and it must be remembered that the Jews, living by these rules, although amongst hostile nations, are well known to have escaped many of the epidemics and plagues from which those nations suffered. These facts are most important, not only as proving the Divine wisdom of the most ancient sanitary laws, but also as evidence of the need for still further development of measures of public hygiene in the United Kingdom, and still more in other lands. It is, finally, not too much to say that the antiseptic system, or, rather, the aseptic system, upon which the greatest triumphs of modern surgery are founded, is nothing more than that absolute cleanliness which the ancient Mosaic regulations so strenuously inculcated.

DRY WOUNDS.

ONE of the most important advances of recent times, in surgery, is the treatment of wounds by the "dry method." Until very recently, it was the custom of many surgeons to use wet applications to wounds—originally on the principle of the cooling and cleansing results of such treatment; and, of course, in many cases of bruised and sloughing wounds, the method is invaluable. But, in the case of surgical incisions, where primary union is sought for, the lessons taught by the processes of Nature have been widely adopted. When the vessels, which have been opened by a clean cut, contract, the surface of the wound becomes glazed with a thin, sticky, pinkish lymph, which rapidly dries, and so when the opposite edges of a clean cut wound are apposed they are gummed together by this lymph, and, the air being excluded, union takes place in a few hours. The effect, therefore, of a dusting powder over such a wound is to absorb any unusual effusion which may take place, and so keep the wound absolutely dry and impervious to the air; and the practical result is, of course, well known, that wounds so treated heal more rapidly and more firmly than when any other method is employed. So far is the practice carried, by some surgeons, that they do not apply any dressings such as lint or wool to the wound unless this requires to be firmly supported.

FALSE CROUP.

A VERY common occurrence, especially in delicate children, is an attack of coughing which, both in violence and sound, closely simulates that of croup, and often arouses the gravest alarm. These cases, however, are frequently due to some reflex nervous irritation; and, in many instances, this is caused by the pressure of a new tooth forcing its way through a hard and tender gum. Cases are also on record in which the cough was due to a plug of wax in one or other ear, thus again causing nerve irritation. In the former instance, a cure is often rapidly effected by the doctor lancing the inflamed gum; and so enabling the tooth to protrude; or, in the latter case, by an injection of warm water, dislodging the accumulation in the canal of the ear.

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