

Medical Matters.

MALARIAL PRECAUTIONS.



NOW-A-DAYS, when so many nurses go abroad to work in malarial districts, it is well that they should know the common-sense precautions which should be taken against this serious disease. It is a well ascertained fact that with care it is possible to keep almost entirely free from jungle fever, even although living amongst miasmatic swamps and drinking swamp water. It is important never to sleep on the bare ground, nor without some kind of shelter, even if it be only a blanket stretched on poles. Flannel should always be worn next to the skin, and sleep should never be attempted in wet clothes. If possible, all water for drinking purposes should be boiled. Five or six grains of quinine should be taken every morning in a cup of hot coffee or water. Finally, recent investigations have shown that, as far as possible, precautions should be taken against the bites of mosquitos. For, as we have pointed out, in these columns, there are strong reasons for believing that malaria is largely spread by means of mosquito bites.

SILVER SUTURES.

EVERY surgeon is aware of the practical usefulness of silver wire as a suture for deep wounds; but it is only within the last few weeks that the reason for its usefulness has been explained. A German surgeon has shown that the lactate of silver is one of the most powerful antiseptics yet discovered, and that when ordinary silver is applied to an infected wound, the surface of the metal becomes oxidized, and the lactate of silver is formed, thus creating a most valuable antiseptic application to the wound. Placed on aseptic surfaces silver undergoes no change, and is neither tarnished nor irritating. It is therefore easy to understand why silver wire, though deeply buried in a wound, does not irritate the tissues, and therefore forms so valuable a connective medium. But the necessity is obvious that the wire which is employed should itself be absolutely aseptic, a condition which boiling in water is usually sufficient to obtain.

FORMALIN.

THE old-fashioned method of disinfecting rooms and furniture by burning sulphur, will probably be superseded by a more effectual and easy method which is now being largely employed. Sulphur fumigation was always troublesome, always more or less dirty, and often inefficient. By the new process to which we refer, it is stated that economy, facility, and efficiency, are all secured. The method adopted is as follows:—Doors and windows, floor and ceiling, are as carefully and tightly sealed as possible. Linen, quilts, blankets, and carpets, are stretched on cords across the room, so as to expose their whole surface completely. Books are suspended, open, by their covers, so that the pages are freely exposed. The walls and floors, and all articles contained in the room, are freely sprayed over with water, but no vessel of water is allowed to remain in the room. Five ounces of the ordinary commercial 40 per cent. solution of Formalin to each 1,000 cubic feet of space, are placed in a distilling apparatus and heat is applied, and the door is closed, the keyhole being carefully plugged. The room is kept closed for at least ten hours, and it is claimed that a more absolute disinfection of the room itself, and of every article in it, is thus obtained, than can be produced by any other known method.

HOT DRINKS.

ONE of the simplest methods of treatment of stomach disorders is now being largely employed. In cases of chronic indigestion the muscular coats of the stomach sooner or later become affected and weakened; and not only do the secretions of the organ prove deficient, but the stomach muscles also fail to move the food with sufficient rapidity round its walls, thus increasing the difficulties of digestion. A glass of hot water in such cases, administered five or six hours after a meal, acts as a direct stimulus to the muscles of the stomach, and so causes the passage of the digested food into the intestines more speedily than would be the case if the weakened organ were left to its own devices. And, moreover, the water cleanses the stomach walls, and so applies the first principles of antiseptics to the treatment of the complaint—rendering the surface more healthy, and so assisting materially towards a cure.

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