

**Medical Matters.****OLIVE OIL.**

THE many advantages of olive oil as an internal medicine are well recognised. But its employment for external purposes hardly equals the importance which was attached to it in the earliest times. From Biblical and other records, the use of olive oil for external injuries and wounds was evidently well known to the ancients; but it is comparatively recently that the remedy has been widely adopted in modern surgery. A further development of its usefulness is strongly recommended now by German surgeons, who believe that, instead of tincture of arnica or some stimulating liniment, infinitely better results are obtained in the treatment of bruises by the application of olive oil as a dressing. In cases of large subcutaneous hæmorrhages due to injuries, rapid and excellent results have followed the use of a compress soaked in the oil, applied to the part, and retained in place by one or two turns of bandage. A certain amount of the oil is undoubtedly absorbed by the skin, and the practical result, whatever the theory may be, is that the extravasation of blood is rapidly absorbed, and disappears much more quickly than under the ordinary methods of treatment.

**DIABETES.**

A CURIOUS fact in connection with this disease has recently been pointed out in an American medical journal, that the affection is seven times more frequent amongst the drivers of railway engines than amongst the ordinary population. Various explanations for this curious fact have been advanced; such, for example, as the constant jarring and shaking to which such men are exposed, the mental strain under which they work, and the changes of temperature which they endure. It seems probable that the statistics of other countries may confirm the figures which American inquirers have published on this matter. With regard to the causation of the disease, it is possible that it may be found in the mechanical effect, upon the nervous system, of the constant vibrations of the body to which the occupation of railway engineers renders them subject. It is for example, a well-known fact that diabetes

follows accidents which involve shocks to part of the brain substance, and it may be that constant slight jars of this part of the brain may be followed by the same result.

**THEORY AND PRACTICE.**

IT is a very frequent complaint, both amongst medical men and nurses, that they are very often unable to obtain for their patients the appliances which are most needed for successful treatment. It is, however, a bad workman who always complains of his tools; and the best trained nurses are those who most successfully overcome the difficulties referred to. It is necessary to be thoroughly well trained, to be able to employ any chance substitute which may be available; because it is essential to understand the principles upon which any particular treatment is founded, in order to be able to adapt unusual methods for its execution. An excellent illustration of this was once observed by the writer, in a nurse who was attending a patient suffering from a severe attack of bronchitis, in a small room which was only warmed by a small closed stove. Such an appliance as a bronchitis steam kettle was quite unavailable; but the close air of the bedroom, of course, intensified the difficulty of the patient's breathing and the dryness of his bronchial tubes. The nurse being directed to keep the air of the room as moist as possible, however, attained that object by dipping a couple of towels in water and hanging them from a piece of twine secured to nails in the opposite walls of the room; the evaporation from the towels afforded the moisture which was required in the air, and the patient was quickly and greatly relieved.

**TURPENTINE.**

THIS remedy has been recently employed with remarkable results in the treatment both of mumps and of scarlet fever, by French physicians; and it is claimed that in every case the attack was so quickly cut short as to lead to the belief that turpentine has what is termed a "specific action" in curing these diseases, and especially the former. The remedy will doubtless be thoroughly tried in this country, and the results will be watched with the greatest interest. But it is a curious fact how, from time to time, the virtues of turpentine are extolled. It is not so very long ago, that a well-known provincial surgeon declared that it was a cure for cancer; and only repeated failures destroyed his faith in its efficacy.

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