

Medical Matters.

STEAM AS A HAEMOSTATIC.



SOME months ago, we referred, in this column, to the then recent discovery of the effect of a jet of steam in checking profuse hæmorrhage in operations on internal organs. Since then the method has been used with increasing frequency and success; and now it is being employed in the treatment of uterine hæmorrhages with the best results. A uterine catheter is attached by an elastic tube to a vessel in which water is being boiled, and the steam from which will register about 212 °F. The jet of steam is usually applied for about two minutes; and in severe cases of uterine growths it has been found that the mucous membrane thereafter shreds away leaving a raw surface which usually forms adhesions with the opposite wall of the canal, and thus causes obliteration of the uterine cavity, and subsequently more or less wasting of the organ. In a number of cases in which the only possibility of cure of internal uterine growths appeared to be the removal of the entire uterus, this method was followed by a complete cure. It is needless to say that the treatment has to be carried out most carefully, and with various stringent precautions; but in skilled hands it may probably produce results which have hitherto been regarded as impossible, except by a dangerous operation.

ERUCTATIONS.

THESE are a symptom of more than one disorder of the digestive system, and especially those in which acidity, or, as it is popularly termed, heart-burn, is present. Probably the most disagreeable form of the affection is that which is found in hysterical women, and which consists of loud rumblings in the abdomen, and frequent gaseous eructations. The cause of the condition is due to these patients forming the habit of spasmodically gulping down quantities of air. As soon as the stomach becomes distended, pain is naturally complained of; and then the noisy eructations take place. The treatment of course is directed, in these cases, not to the digestive organs but to the nervous system. Cases are on record in which patients were completely cured by placing a cork between the teeth for some hours each day, so that it was impossible for her to swallow the air which caused her symptoms.

PROTRACTED SLEEP.

CASES are well known in which persons especially after long continued illness or great bodily exertion have slept for several days with the greatest benefit to their mental and bodily condition; but an extraordinary case which has recently been published is deserving of note, because it is only equalled by the performance of Indian fakirs. A boy, aged seventeen, after severe mental exertion in preparing for an examination, during which he allowed himself very little time for sleep, complained one day of feeling drowsy, and the next day fell asleep on a railway journey. After this it became almost impossible to keep him awake. He would even fall asleep while on his feet. The pulse was low and weak, the temperature normal, the pupils were much contracted, there was no appearance of catalepsy, but merely continuous, quiet slumber. When roused to take nourishment, he replied to questions like a person talking in his sleep, and often went asleep again whilst drinking. This condition persisted for more than fifty days, but finally he completely recovered. It is stated that there are eighteen other well authenticated cases of such protracted slumber, and of these only eight recovered completely, while four died in their sleep.

SMALL-POX STATISTICS.

DR. BARRY'S report on the small-pox epidemic in Sheffield contains very striking figures. The results to vaccinated children living in houses invaded by small-pox, as compared with children who were unvaccinated, is shown in the following figures:—

	per 1,000
The attack-rate of the vaccinated	78
The attack-rate of the unvaccinated. . . .	869
The death-rate of the vaccinated.	1
The death-rate of the unvaccinated. . . .	381

Excepting children under ten years of age, and taking only the population above that age, Dr. Barry states the comparison between the vaccinated and the unvaccinated in the following figures:—

	per 1,000
The attack-rate in persons twice vaccinated	3
The attack-rate in persons once vaccinated. .	19
The attack-rate in persons not vaccinated. .	94
The death-rate in persons twice vaccinated. .	0.08
The death-rate in persons once vaccinated. .	1
The death-rate in persons not vaccinated. .	51

Such conclusive evidence would carry conviction to all unprejudiced minds.

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