

## Practical Points.

### The Antiseptic Properties of Nitrate of Silver.

At the Seventh Congress of Surgeons from the four Scandinavian countries, held in Christiania from August 8th to 10th, Professor Rovsing as reported in the *Lancet*, communicated a note on the Antiseptic Properties of Nitrate of Silver. For many years he had, he said, been using it, and now preferred it to all other antiseptics in the overwhelming majority of circumstances where antiseptics were needed. His reasons for doing so were that, though not poisonous to the human body, it was one of the strongest antiseptics known, and that it retained its bactericidal power also when converted into albuminate or chloride of silver. He recommended it particularly for the impregnation of gauze for dressings. It had enabled him to do away entirely with iodoform gauze in his hospital—e.g., he always used "lapis-gauze" for replenishing the Mikulicz bag in laparotomies. "Lapis-catgut," the preparation of which was exceedingly simple, was absolutely safe and trustworthy as to sterility, agreeable to handle and tie, and, as tests had proved, stronger than raw catgut, while all other methods of preparing catgut lessened its strength. Moreover, "lapis-catgut" kept its strength for years, while iodine-catgut soon became brittle.

### The Care of the Teeth.

Miss Jennie M. Draper, writing in the *American Journal of Nursing* on the Care of the Teeth, says:

The vast majority of people have been told by the dentist to brush their teeth twice a day, morning and night, and they consider themselves indeed virtuous who follow this rule with a fair degree of regularity. The breakfast debris stays on the teeth until bedtime, joined by that of lunch and dinner. Even business men and women can find it possible to brush their teeth during the day, and if the habit is once acquired they will be quite miserable if they neglect it. Five brushings a day is the ideal and proper care for every mouth, four will bring very satisfactory results; anything under this number is rather uncertain.

The first thing in the morning the teeth should be thoroughly brushed with tepid water to thoroughly remove the decomposed mucous and saliva produced in the mouth during sleep. After breakfast the food should be removed with the help of a dentifrice. The thorough removal of grease from the teeth is a chemical action, not mechanical, and requires a solvent such as is contained in a dentifrice. After lunch a dentifrice should again be used, and once again at night, just before retiring, if the brushing has been omitted after dinner. The fact is appreciated that care of the teeth cannot be made one's sole object in life, nor all one's spare time be devoted to the mouth, but such duties soon become habits, and as they are based upon common sense, this extra time and effort amount to practically

nothing, and will more than compensate for the trouble it involves.

There is but one way of artificially stimulating the deeper tissues around the neck of the teeth, and that is by stimulating the surface of the gums. Therefore it must be remembered that the gums should be brushed inside and out just as thoroughly as the teeth. If we wish to bring the blood to the back of the hand we would not rub the skin with a slow, deliberate stroke, but would use a fast, vigorous one. The toothbrush should be made to travel as fast as the hand can make it go, and in this way the proper stimulus will be imparted to the gums which, in drawing their blood supply from below, will cause a free and plentiful supply to the alveolus and peridental membrane, and these are the tissues we are after.

Let the nurse then do what she can to keep her own teeth in a perfect condition and, so far as her profession will permit, to impress others with the necessity of doing the same.

Think what this education would mean in preventing many of the infectious conditions now found and treated by specialists of the throat, nose, and ear; of stomach and intestinal disorders where the products of bacterial digestion in the mouth are being constantly swept into the system. No one would think of eating tainted meat or fish, sour milk, or stale eggs, yet these are but undergoing bacterial digestion, the same that takes place in the mouth improperly cleansed.

### To Soften Plaster Casts.

Acetic acid brushed in a line over a plaster-paris bandage will render it soft, and in a few minutes it may be cut with an ordinary knife.

### Care of Dishes used by Consumptive Persons.

Dr. John Warren Achorn, writing in the *Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette* on the prevention of tuberculosis, says: The tubercle bacilli never invade a well nourished, healthy body, they find lodgment only on people whose tissues are debilitated; those whose powers of resistance are low, because their nutrition is bad, their blood poor, and their vital or nervous force exhausted.

The dishes used by consumptives should not be left in the room, for flies to run over, but removed and washed immediately. Food partly eaten by persons who are ill, and left on a plate or some other dish, should not be tasted by others. All such food should be thrown away or kept separate for the use of the person for whom prepared. If only small portions are served at any meal, and repeated if relished, none need be wasted. It is a great mistake for children to eat foods that have been partially eaten by another who is ill. Children's teeth are defective and germs lodged in the cavities may reach the glands of the neck or the tonsils, only to infect them, or they may lodge in the intestines, carried down from cavities in the teeth by the food munched and swallowed and so produce or establish disease in these parts.

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