

## Medical Matters.

### NEW TREATMENT FOR DEAFNESS.



It is reported that a girl between fourteen and fifteen years of age, who had been gradually growing more deaf since her birth, was cured in less than a fortnight by a novel method, and this after the ordinary treatment on the throat, and by catheterisation of the eustachian tubes had been tried without any permanent good result. "Under the influence, however, of a regular course of compressed air baths, the hearing improved to a marked degree" it is said, and as this treatment took place nearly two years ago, and the case is only now reported from Brussels, it may be assumed that the cure has proved to be permanent. It would be interesting to learn particulars, and details, and whether it has been the only case which has, in the author's hands, yielded to this form of treatment. It is somewhat difficult, without such facts, to understand how or why it should have been so successful.

### THE DETERMINATION OF SEX.

Numberless theories have been evolved, during the last two thousand years, to explain the causation of the sex of the foetus; facts and figures are generally adduced in support of each theory, and then in due course other facts and figures are brought forward which conclusively prove that it is quite untenable. For many years it was taught, and almost believed, that the ova from one ovary produced males, and those from the other produced females, but abdominal surgery has quite disposed of that assumption, seeing that patients, who have had one ovary removed, have subsequently borne children of both sexes. It is, however, a question often of the greatest importance, and always of much interest, to learn beforehand the sex of the foetus, and consequently any facts which would furnish a definite rule for prediction in such a case, should be carefully observed and recorded. One of the latest theories, and one which certainly possesses some clinical support, is that if conception occurs shortly before a menstrual period, the child will be a male, whereas, if it occurs shortly after the catamenia have ceased, the child will be a female. The truth of this theory must be very largely proved by accurately recorded facts, such as obstetric Nurses have the best possible means of collecting, and we should be glad if those of our readers who are engaged in monthly work, would investigate this

matter, and in every case which they attend make a note of the exact dates of the patient's last menstruation, and of her confinement, and of the sex of the child; and if they would send us these in tabular form when they had collected about twenty. It would also be important to record whether the last period was normal in all particulars. We have often thought that Nurses could, if sufficiently guided, carry out most important collective investigations of this kind, and we trust that such of our readers as are engaged in obstetric nursing will carry out and communicate to us the results of the suggested inquiry.

## Nurses of Note.

MISS ISLA STEWART,

*Matron and Superintendent of Nursing, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London.*

MISS ISLA STEWART was born in Dumfriesshire, and comes of a younger branch of the well-known Highland family, the Stewarts of Appin. There is an old saying that if one climbed to the top of Mount Ararat, one would there find a "braw Scott" comfortably encamped. Whether this be true or not, it is a fact that the Matronship of St. Bartholomew's Hospital—a position which carries with it precedence in the Nursing world, owing to this being the oldest Royal Hospital in the Kingdom—has had two Scotch Matrons in succession; and the sister Royal Hospital, St. Thomas's, has also at present a Scotchwoman at its head.

Miss Isla Stewart entered the Nightingale Training School in connection with St. Thomas's Hospital, in September, 1879, and, after eight months' work as a Probationer, performed Sister's duties in various wards. In January, 1881, she was formally appointed Sister of the Alexandra Ward (female surgical), to which Mr. Sydney Jones and Mr. John Croft were attached as surgeons. In this responsible position she did admirable work for four years, and resigned her post upon being appointed Matron of the Small-pox Camp at Darenth, in Kent, under the Metropolitan Asylums Board—a position which required the most complete self-abnegation and courage. Here Miss Stewart lived in a tent for the greater part of a year, superintending at first the nursing of 500 patients—a number which rapidly increased to

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