Miscellaneous.

Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis.

The following is an epitome of an article by C. F. Bailey, of the Sussex County Hospital, appearing in the *British Medical Journal* of January 2nd, 1909. The author accepts the theory that the disease is primarily due to micro-organisms, or their toxins, but does not lose sight of the fact that certain local conditions have their place in the etiology, more especially as regards predisposition to, and aggravation of, the inflammatory lesion.

Part of the want of success we obtain from the administration of bactericidal drugs, is due to the minute quantities which necessarily circulate in the normally slow nutrient streams which supply the joint tissues. It is with the view of increasing this flow that Bailey recommends the following course of treatment. He condemns the use of the ordinary methods of applying heat locally, on account of the "moist air heat," which has been almost unavoidable up to the present, and the difficulties found in its regulation; the ordinary low candle-power lamps in use give out rays almost entirely yellow and yellow-orange, while "high candle-power" lamps supply rays from ultra-red to ultra-violet, and it is from this type, apparently, that the most satisfactory results are obtained. He recommends a single large lamp, with a thick carbon filament, having a luminosity of 500 candles, mounted in a reflecting funnel. With this a dry heat of 400 deg. F. can be obtained, endured by the patient, and its intensity easily regulated. The result consists in dilatation of the blood and lymphatic vessels, lowering of local arterial pressure, and increase in local metabolism; a rapid alleviation of pain also follows. The light is usually used for about twenty minutes, when treatment by "ionization" follows.

It is an accepted fact that when a constant current passes through living tissue from electrodes soaked in two per cent. solution of any salt, the basic radical travels into the tissue from the positive towards the negative electrode, whilst the acid radical travels in the opposite direction. It is found that the quantity of nascent radical travelling with a two milliampere per square centimeter current is quite appreciable; if the joint be already rendered hyperemic by local heat, the