

meal, and that the poor child must be "strengthened for the operation. Occasionally, as in old imbibers, the skin is ready for the knife before the eye tolerates the finger. The deep pinch of an artery-forceps at the seat of the operation is a better test.—*British Medical Journal*.

MEDICINE.

On the Action of Amyl-Nitrite on the Vascular Tonus and on the Heart Beat.—Dr. W. Filehne finds as most other experimenters have done, that the inhalation of amyl-nitrite causes a considerable dilatation of the blood vessels of the head and upper parts of the body. From a review of former experiments he concludes that the mechanism of this dilatation (*i. e.*, whether it is due to an action on the vessels themselves or on their nerve centres) is still a matter for investigation. He adduces as an argument against the direct action on the vessels the fact that only some of these are dilated, and that the limits of the area of vascular dilatation are pretty sharply marked. If, then, the vessels were affected by the local action of the nitrite it would be difficult to explain how neighbouring vessels, through which the same blood was passing, should re-act so differently. Again, if the vessels were directly affected, those of the lungs, by which the absorption occurs, ought to be most dilated. But having made a window in the chest wall of a rabbit, sparing the pleura so as to avoid entrance of air, Filehne saw no change of colour of the lungs to follow inhalation of amyl-nitrite, although the vascular dilatation in the vessels of the ear was extremely marked. He considers the question is settled by the following ingenious experiment:—The sympathetic was divided on one side in the neck of a rabbit. The vessels of the ear on that side dilated. The upper segment of the divided nerve was then irritated by an induction current of such strength that the vessels were brought into a condition of mean contraction, so as to equal in size those of the sound side. Amyl-nitrite was then