

HYDROTHERAPY ON MENTAL AND NERVOUS DISEASES.*

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Winternitz, in his system of physiologic therapeutics, says: "Hydrotherapy is the systematic application of water at various temperatures and pressures, and in varying forms, to the surface of the body for dietetic, prophylactic and therapeutic purposes."

To properly carry out the principles of hydrotherapy as laid down by Winternitz it is necessary to have an apparatus whereby water may be applied at an exact dosage, that is, it must be capable of absolutely regulating temperature and pressure to suit the various conditions which we are called upon to treat, if we are to meet with success.

We are still in the embryonic stage at the Homewood, as far as hydiatic treatment is concerned, having only had a year's experience with the apparatus as designed by Simon Baruch, of New York City, but the results thus far obtained are very encouraging, and lead us to hope that much good may be done along the lines of hydrotherapy. I do not think that I can lay too much stress upon the fact that the treatment must be exact to be successful. Just as you give exact doses of drugs for certain conditions, so you give exact doses of water—you expect certain results to follow the dose of the drug—and you also expect certain results to follow your water dosage—therefore, I say, be exact.

The good effects of this system of treatment can easily be nullified in the hands of unskilled and unintelligent operators; furthermore, each patient is a law unto himself and demands close study by the physicians and the bath attendant. Subjective symptoms cannot be entirely ignored, and sometimes too strict adherence to a definite prescription may do more harm than good, and the bath attendant must learn by experience to recognize any error in the prescription. On the other hand, however, due care must be taken that the patient does not lead physician and operator astray by misleading statements to their own detriment.

The rationale of treatment in cases ranging from the mildest form of neurasthenia to the gravest form of melancholia generally resolves itself into a question of suitable diet and its

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