

Further such soluble carbo-hydrates (prepared according to the directions supplied with each "Food") form a fluid vehicle in which wine or spirits can be given pleasantly, when some stimulant is indicated.

Preparations of predigested starch are of unspeakable value in acute pyrexial states when the natural digestive powers are greatly impaired.—*Journal of Reconstructives.*

### THE TREATMENT OF CHRONIC HEART DISEASE.

The observations of Dr. Schott, of Nauheim (*Berliner Klin. Wochensch.*, 1885, Nos. 33-36), since 1871, extend over 300 cases, and the clinical histories of a fair proportion of these are followed up. It will be remembered that Stokes was the first to advocate a life of active exercise in chronic heart disease. Indeed Stokes went so far as to say that, for a man with well-compensated valvular lesion, the greatest misfortune that could happen to him was to have his cardiac trouble discovered by a medical man. This was because a number of restrictions were, as a rule, imposed upon his usual mode of life, all tending to a debilitating illness. The consequences was that the heart-muscle, like the other muscles of body, lost strength, and dilatation of the heart supervened earlier than would otherwise have been the case. Stokes's doctrine of the positive value to the heart of a life of activity has received more attention on the Continent than amongst his own countrymen. In Germany, especially, it has been developed into a complete system of treatment, on various lines. Oertel, as is well known, prefers hill-climbing to any other method, care being taken to ward off any threatening dyspnoea by repeated stoppages, and by making a few deep voluntary respirations before proceeding. This mode of exertion is selected partly also from a desire to unload the venous system, and the right side of the heart in particular, by diminishing the volume of the blood generally; and the excessive perspiration induced by mountain expeditions does this gradually and effectually, the supply of liquid being duly restricted by removal of the excess of water from the blood.

Dr. Schott makes great use of stimulating baths, together with the systematic exercise of the various muscles of the body at home by the aid of an assistant; but the bath is made apparently the chief element of the treatment. An artificial Nauheim bath (apart from carbonic acid) may be rudely imitated by adding to softish water 1 to 1½ per cent. of common salt, and as much per mille of chloride of calcium, the temperature being 93° F. Very weak patients have the water a little warmer, but not beyond 96° F.; and in all cases the bath should be a short one, a second chill being avoided. The baths are gradually made stronger, cooler, and the patient remains longer, according as he improves. The full strength is from 2

to 3 per cent. of chloride of sodium, and from ½ to 1 per cent. of chloride of calcium, with carbonic acid. The last named may be supplied artificially by adding equal parts by weight of bicarbonate of soda and hydrochloric acid, the full strength being 1 kilogramme of each in a bath of 250 litres. But much smaller quantities suffice at first.

The exercises consist of various movements of the limbs and trunk, each movement being opposed by an assistant, who gives way as the patient exerts his strength. The greatest care is taken that the patient breathes easily the whole time. The details may be found in Dr. Schott's original article (*Berlin Klin. Wochensch.*, Nos. 33-36, 1885), reprinted as a pamphlet by Schumacher, of Berlin.

The therapeutic results have already been summarized in these columns. Suffice it to say, that diminution of the cardiac dullness during a course of baths can be actually demonstrated, and, as a rule, the improvement in the patient's condition is immediate and striking.

No alteration is made in the solid food, but Dr. Schott has for years restricted the fluid supply whenever high arterial pressure existed. Finally, mountain tours are recommended where there is obesity, but in moderation.

This system of baths and exercise is a rival to Oertel's mountaineering system, and possesses certain advantages in that it can be adopted at home, and can be regulated to a nicety to suit the patient. But Dr. Schott's observations lack the scientific precision of Prof. Oertel's. It is earnestly to be hoped that a more active life may be ordered by medical men generally in the treatment of heart disease. It is to be feared that a merely passive existence is still widely recommended to any unfortunate patients with (mitral) valvular lesion and dyspnoea.

### TREATMENT OF THE HYSTERICAL ATTACK.

Dr. Albert Ruault gives a simple method which he had found very efficacious in controlling an hysterical fit. It consists in making firm and constant pressure over the supraorbital nerve at its point of emergence from the supraorbital foramen. The head is held securely between the palms of the hands, while pressure is made over the nerve on each side with the thumbs. The writer says that the patients under this treatment first contract the facial muscles with an expression of pain, cry out, and then take several quick successive inspirations. The breath is held for a few seconds and, then, with a long expiration, the muscles relax and the attack is ended. The pressure of the thumb should now be relaxed; otherwise it may have the opposite effect and excite another convulsion. Pressure over any nerve-trunk at the point where it becomes superficial will have the same effect; but the supraorbital nerves are chosen because of their convenient situation.—*France Medical.*