

cases, provided that no excitement be produced by the environment. In animals, alcohol acts upon the muscular tissue of the heart, impairing its efficiency and weakening its contractions; it has no effect on the pulse rate, unless given in large quantities, when it produces effects similar to those described under chloroform and ether, but much less marked, namely, weakening first of the auricular and then of the ventricular systole, followed by distention of both cavities, and slowing. Cushny thinks that the slowing of the heart which often follows the administration of alcohol in fever is due rather to diminished cerebral excitement, than to a direct action upon the heart.

Cushny considers the indications for the use of alcohol ill defined. Its value in cases of hæmorrhage, shock, or severe cardiac depression from any cause, he considers due partly to the irritating action of alcohol upon the stomach and partly to a narcotic action lessening pain, and anxiety. Alcohol he considers to have, however, a distinct food value; it is easily absorbed and demands much less energy from the digestive organs than fats and starchy foods, and has a higher value as a producer of energy than sugar. It cannot supply the place of the nitrogenous foods, but given along with them it may lead to a greater economy of the tissues.

While we all recognise the fact that as a pharmacologist Professor Cushny speaks with much authority, few of us will feel inclined to discard at once the experience of the past as to the great value of alcohol as a prompt and reliable cardiac stimulant in certain atonic conditions; nevertheless the results of the many investigations summarised by Professor Cushny cannot be lightly put aside, and the question must arise whether the value of alcohol in disease, may not arise more from the fact that in febrile conditions it acts as a rapidly assimilated food rather than, as we have hitherto supposed, as a prompt cardiac and nerve stimulant.

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#### MCGILL PATHOLOGICAL MUSEUM.

During the coming month there will be a special exhibit in the Museum of a most interesting series of preparations exhibiting Polydactylism and Syndactylism, together with numerous X-Ray photographs of these conditions collected by Dr. Shepherd. A series of specimens contributed during the year by Dr. James Bell, and a collection of old medical instruments which have been brought together from the collections of the late Drs. Holmes, Howard, Ross, Fenwick and other old members of the staff, and from the Montreal General Hospital. Any member of the profession possessing old medical instruments, especially those of last century, is begged to contribute such to this collection, which it is hoped to make both interesting and valuable.