

Pediatrics.

CINNAMON IN THE TREATMENT OF SCARLET FEVER.

(From the *British Medical Journal*, May, 1897.)

SIR,—In the article on scarlet fever, in the second volume of Professor Clifford Allbutt's *System of Medicine*, recently reviewed in the *British Medical Journal*, at page 173, while dealing with the complications of that disease, the writer says:

The treatment of the recognized complications of scarlet fever is important. During recent months, while testing upon a series of cases the value of decoction of cinnamon—for which drug an abortive action had been claimed by Dr. Carne Ross in cases which could be brought under treatment at a sufficiently early date—I was surprised to find a considerable reduction in the incidence of some of the more common complications of the disease. Indeed in a series of 200 consecutive cases which were put under this treatment within twenty-four hours of the appearance of the rash, the incidence of adenitis, rheumatism, nephritis, and albuminuria was found to be about fifty per cent. below the average. The general death-rate, however, showed no reduction.

Whether rightly or wrongly, the complications of scarlet fever are greatly dreaded by the public at large, and a reduction of fifty per cent. in the incidence of these complications, following on the administration of cinnamon, is so fairly satisfactory a result, as I hope to justify me in asking you to allow me space in your columns to describe my method of treatment; and also to state, as briefly as I can, the general theory on which that treatment is based. Vaccination, which attempts to sterilize a patient against some disease by itself giving the disease in some altered form, suggested to my mind some years ago that it might also perhaps be possible, if you got a patient very early in any disease of microbic origin—so early that the microbe had not had time to lay down a large cellar of ptomaines, if I may be allowed such an expression—that at this period of the disease it might be possible so to saturate the patient with some drug that had no selective action, and was absolutely non-poisonous, and could therefore be employed in enormous quantities, that he should practically become tanned or sterilised; and that if this could be effected, then possibly the microbe would cease to flourish, and if the microbe ceased to flourish, the disease might in consequence run a mild course. It seemed to me that, if successful, this method would have this advantage over inoculation, that it would be absolutely devoid of danger, and would possibly be equally applicable to any microbic disease.

It is unnecessary to explain here why I elected to employ cinnamon, or why I took twenty-four hours from the onset of a disease as a time limit, and determined not to experiment on any cases where illness had existed for a longer period.

Having experimented on a certain number of cases of influenza,