

to the examination of the water. The ethereal extract in this case contained, besides crystallizable alkaloids, fatty acids, and volatile aromatic compounds, a remarkable quantity of benzoic acid.

"In a third case the extract was from the water of an at times stagnant pool on a meadow once used as a pasture for cows, but which had been suspected to contain some poisonous weed, for at several times heads of cattle pasturing on it had died suddenly and mysteriously. A few drops of the mixed watery solution injected into a rabbit killed it within twenty minutes. The meadow in question is located about a quarter of a mile beyond the city limits, surrounded by farms, but has been deserted for the last five or six years. It is perhaps worth mentioning that from the same water, at the time when the last death on the pasture occurred, I received pure cultures of the anthrax bacillus.

"For the practical hygienic examination of waters the above method is fully reliable, and seems to be superior, as regards simplicity and delicacy, to any of the other processes. It permits of detecting directly even the minutest admixture of sewage or privy material without fail. I nevertheless always determine the organic matter in toto by ignition, which, besides, on account of the peculiarities of the odor of the smoke exhaled at low ignition, may lead to some good judgment as regards the nature and quality too of the organic matter present. The permanganate and the albuminoid processes I consider as very vague and uncertain in their results and in the conclusions drawn from them.

"The products of the ethereal extract after the methods described above are worthy of being investigated more scientifically. Some of them apparently will be found to belong to the class of the so-called ptomanies or cadaver alkaloids, the chemical nature and physiological action of which recently have become the subject of closer study."—*The Sanitarian*.

SOME TENDENCIES OF MODERN MEDICATION.

A marked tendency of recent medication is in the direction of a continuous and limited administration of drugs. This has grown out of the now generally accepted idea, that the patient is the proper subject of treatment, rather than the disease with which he may be afflicted.

The notion that the doctor is simply a prescriber of medicines, and that his function wholly or in chief part ceases there, if it ever had a substantial basis either in theory or in practice, is rapidly disappearing before the advancing light of a more intelligent and successful conception of the practitioner's function. The disease as modified by

constitutional diathesis, idiosyncrasies, sanitary surroundings, inherited conditions, and by many other influences which refuse to be classified, becomes a secondary consideration. Indeed, so clear are the indications, and for the most part so uniform the respective lines of medicinal treatment of the more important diseases, that it should become a mere routine matter, simple and relatively easy of execution, to prescribe the standard medicines for a simple unmodified case. But not so with the larger and broader function of treating the patient. As a practical matter, the doctor may often exercise his highest and best skill and accomplish the greatest possible good for his patient by advising the entire suspension of medication, as such. The day has already arrived when the intelligent physician is very wary about ascribing the recovery of his patient to the medicines employed. Thus far has skepticism in regard to the specific power of medicine over disease extended; and hence the tendency of to-day toward a limited and continuous medication.

Another manifest tendency of comparatively recent appearance, but which promises rapid development, is toward the exhibition of relatively small doses, frequently repeated. That an effect can be produced by this method of administration, not only different in character, but preferable in results, seems from our *present* standpoint, to say the least, highly probable.

It occurred to the writer to recently observe the most gratifying results from one-tenth grain doses of calomel repeated hourly until the desired effect was produced, in a case of obstinate constipation and general glandular inactivity, associated with the digestive disturbances of advanced Bright's disease. This peculiar specific action of the remedy was realized much more promptly and satisfactorily, and with far less constitutional disturbance than would have been the case had the old-time single dose of ten grains been exhibited. The sentiment of the profession in favor of this method of medication seems to be rapidly gaining ground, as evidenced by the demand upon our manufacturing chemists for *granules, tablets, etc.*, containing minute doses. As an illustration we may mention what is well-known to all, that tablets containing $\frac{1}{10}$ of a grain of corrosive sublimate are now kept in our leading pharmacies. Manifestly the tendency of the times is toward minutely divided doses; but, be it understood, this statement is not designed to convey the idea of infinitesimal dosage according to the homœopathic plan. Minute dosage is one thing and no dosage quite another.

The tendency of modern medication toward the employment of medicines easy and pleasant of administration has become so manifest and general in its application as to need but a bare allusion. Indeed this tendency seems to have about reached the ultimate stage of realization!