

Special Selection.

IRON THERAPY IN THE TREATMENT OF SMALLPOX.

BY MARTIN C. WOODRUFF, M.D., ST. LOUIS, MO.

As far back as 1893 my attention was first called to Pepto-Mangan (Gude). But it was not until the spring of 1895, when I was appointed Superintendent of Quarantine and Smallpox Hospital at St. Louis, that I had opportunity to test thoroughly its merits.

Upon my entrance to the aforesaid institution I found 118 patients in various stages of variola. The sanitary conditions were not of the best, consequently septicemia, pyemia, boils and abscesses were of frequent occurrence; in fact, one ward of some twenty-five odd beds was used exclusively for this class of patients.

In my endeavor to combat this condition of affairs, my mind of necessity reverted to the iron preparations. After using iron in its numerous forms, I found it entirely too astringent and acid to exhibit for any length of time.

It was at this time that my previous experience with Pepto-Mangan (Gude) led me to make some experiments to ascertain for my own benefit the actual value of iron and manganese in these conditions.

After several months' continuous examination (microscopical) I found that in all cases of variola the hemoglobin was diminished to less than 42 per cent., and the red blood corpuscles were diminished to such extent that the actual average count in some eighty-five cases was less than 2,273,000. After four weeks' treatment (the general average time patients were confined to the institution) the hemoglobin had increased 50 per cent. and the red blood cells 46 per cent. Believing that these cases were exactly suitable and amenable to treatment by Pepto-Mangan (Gude), provided it would do what was claimed for it, I decided to exhibit it exclusively and prove the results by actual demonstration in the increase of the hemoglobin percentage and the increase of the number of red blood corpuscles.

The similarity of these cases of necessity make the history