

Mineral Water for Heart Disease.

The following interesting and valuable paper is by an eminent Paris physician: The advisability of the use of mineral waters in the treatment of diseases of the heart is a question that has been not a little discussed of recent times, and during the last few years the waters of Aix-les-Bains, of the Mount Dore and the mud baths of Dax have been especially recommended.

The use of the latter, when they are handled with skill, is quite supported by the heart. They give it a relative amount of rest by lowering the arterial tension without hastening its contractions and at the same time they act as an energetic stimulant to the general nutrition of the body, which may possibly have a certain influence over the different forms of myocarditis, which are, after all, connected in some way with a disorder in the cardiac nutrition.

This physiological action justifies in a measure the use of certain springs and mud baths in the treatment of diseases of the heart, but I cannot go so far as to share the conviction of a certain class of physicians who are in favor of sending rheumatic patients with heart trouble to some warm mineral spring at the earliest possible moment—in other words, twenty-five or thirty days after the acute cardiac manifestations have disappeared—in the dangerous hope that the more recent the lesion the greater the chances of its being benefitted by the waters.

HYDRO-MINERAL TREATMENT BAD FOR OLD VALVULAR COMPLAINTS.

As a general thing valvular complaints of long standing are an absolute contraindication to all hydro-mineral treatment of whatever kind it may be.

The only things that we ought to treat and that we can treat are the general diseases under the influence of which cardiac trouble is produced and grows. I refer especially to rheumatic complaints. At the Mount Dore, at Neris, at La Malore, at the Eaux Chaudes, at Chaudesaignes, at Saint Nectaire, at Nauchem and sometimes at Aix-les-Bains, the fits of palpitation and of oppression, and in some rare cases, the cardiac murmurs of certain rheumatic patients have been observed to disappear.

Certain cases are cited in which Bourbon-l'Archambault has caused pericardiac deposits to disappear. Young patients suffering from repeated acute rheumatic attacks and with aortic insufficiency have been known to bear for many years an energetic treatment at Dax without being at all inconvenienced thereby and have had their rheumatic manifestations greatly benefited without increasing in any way their cardiac lesions.

The conclusion which I draw from all these facts is that certain mineral waters and mud baths can be used with perfect safety with young rheumatic patients with whom the cardiac disorders are neither too recent nor too far gone, with whom the compensation is well established, and especially with whom there are no signs of endarteritis.

But to infer from these facts that all diseases of the heart can be benefited by mineral springs or mud baths is an immense mistake, as the two ideas are separated by a vast abyss which will not be closed for many a day yet.

TREATMENT OF MYOCARDITIS.

A very interesting chapter could be written on the hydro-mineral treatment of the different forms of myocarditis, but in the present state of our knowledge we have not at our disposal the facts which could give to such a chapter the indispensable clinical basis of which it stands in need. I shall, therefore, be obliged to place myself on a purely theoretical standpoint, but at the same time on one that may at some future day be the starting point of a rational line of therapeutics.

The pathogenesis of the different forms of chronic myocarditis is still a mystery as regards its essential, anatomical process at any rate. What the bond is which connects the arthritic diathesis to the different cardiac sclerosis no one is in a position to say; we do not, therefore, know of any form of preventive therapeutics.

Now the study of the disorders in the nutrition of arthritic patients with arterio sclerosis and myocarditis has led me to the following theory:—

One of the characteristic points in the nutrition of uricemic patients, for instance, is the presence in excess in the plasma of different products of hydration and of waste, of nitrogenous or ternary nature, with marked irritating properties and difficult to eliminate on account of their little solubility. The muscular fibres of the heart, which are in direct contact with a lymphatic cavity, pour into it constantly products of this nature. If the elimination of these products is lessened for one reason or another,

(superabundance of waste products, temporary insufficiency of the passages by which they are carried off, sluggishness of the lymphatic current, &c.) these products will exercise their power of irritation on the intra-cardiac connective tissue, which will proliferate, while the muscular fibre will react and become hypertrophied. Such will be the first act of an interstitial myocarditis, of which the ulterior evolution will depend on the length and degree of the source of irritation and on the nutrition of the muscular fibre.

In presence of a pathogenesis such as this what should theoretically be the treatment to be advised? It will be a treatment capable of putting a stop to the unnatural process of dissimilation which is producing these irritating substances, to hasten the lymphatic circulation and to favor all forms of elimination; it is, therefore, a treatment which both lessens the formation of irritating products and also the length of time during which they remain in the lymphatic spaces of the heart, in order to reduce to a minimum the interstitial process of irritation, which is the greater number of cases of myocarditis.

MINERAL WATERS BETTER THAN DRUGS.

Certain mineral waters can fulfil this purpose far better than all the drugs of the pharmacopœia put together. I will take for example the treatment at Aix-les-Bains.

Let us imagine a patient of hereditary arthritic temperament, with a slight degree of arterio sclerosis, not very active, following the sedentary life led by fashionable women in the country, endowed with a vigorous appetite, and satisfying it very fully at a well provided table. Little by little she notices that she loses her breath in walking; she has palpitations and irregular movements of the heart, but the ear can detect no abnormal sounds by auscultation. Slight, painful manifestations of rheumatic nature attract the attention of her physician, who advises a course of treatment at Aix-les-Bains. While there she takes a douche massage for ten minutes every other day and a short bath on the intervening days. At the end of three weeks she is obliged to interrupt the course of treatment, during which the arthritic symptoms had not seemed to have been affected in any way; but on returning to her home she soon perceives that she can now walk more easily, that she is less liable to get out of breath and that she has fewer and less intense palpitations. On comparing the analyses of urine made before and after the treatment, it is found that under its influence the process of dissimilation has been modified and that the extractive substance and uric acid, which are irritating for the different tissues, have diminished in quantity.

Have we not the right to think that there is some connection between these changes in the nutrition of the elements and the improvement in the functional cardiac symptoms? And as this patient, who is already affected with arterio sclerosis and in all likelihood predestined to interstitial myocarditis, finds that the symptoms, however slight they may have been, which betrayed the first stage of the disease, are lessened, can we not establish a relation from cause to effect between our therapeutical action and the result that has been obtained, and deduce a species of proof in support of the truth of the pathogenesis which I formulated a little above?

THE WALKING CURE.

The walking cure, which, connected with a special regime, has given such good results to certain physicians in Germany in the treatment of fat around the heart, probably acts in a similar way. Absolute quiet, which has for so long been enforced with cardiac patients, does them actual harm in some cases, as it favors the stagnation of the irritating substances in the lymphatic spaces of the heart. Regular and moderate exercise helps to carry off the irritating elements, mechanically at first and chemically afterward, by hastening their combustion. If the means of exit (the kidney) be sufficiently permeable the elimination of these products proceeds just so much the better. It has been noticed in the German treatment that success is more likely to follow when the urine contains no albumen.

It will be easily seen that at the present time I can do nothing more than state this theory, which seems to have a great future before it—that is to say, the prophylactic hydromineral treatment of the different forms of myocarditis at their beginning. I would like to call the careful attention of the physicians practising at the springs to this subject.

The only remaining point is to consider which springs can be used in applying this new method. They are very numerous. To the resorts which I have already named can be added Badenweiler, with its large baths, which render such great service in cardiac neuroses brought on by sexual exhaustion, hypochondria, the abuse of tobacco, &c.

In the same order of ideas the waters containing sulphate of sodium, combined with a strict regime, seem to me also worth trying. It is already known that Saint-Nectaire with its slight mineral qualities, has, when the treatment is well handled, an action which is very like the one of which I am speaking. This would lead me also to try Carlsbad, Brides and Mirs, but in slightly axative doses.

A Mother's Ceaseless Love.

The Strange, Sad Vigil of Rizpah: "But the king took the two sons of Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Amnon and Mephiboseth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son Barzillai the Melohathite; and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord; and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the beginning of the barley harvest. And Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took sackcloth and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest, till water dropped upon them from out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."—1 Samuel xxi., 8-10.

Three thousand years and more have passed away since Rizpah with breaking heart, kept her strange, sad vigil under the shadow of the seven crosses that darkened the sacred hill of Gibeath; three thousand years, each of which has had some terrorism to tell, and yet it is very questionable whether in all these years the world has furnished a more pathetic story than this, of Rizpah, "the mother of our many sorrows," of the ancient Jewish world. The awful story is told in a few words. To appease the unslumbering vengeance of the Gibeonites, whom Saul in the days of his power had shamefully wronged, seven of his sons were offered in bloody sacrifice. Seven crosses were erected on the heights of Gibeath, and the seven young men became sad examples of the sins of a father coming upon the children with awful sadness. It was in the beginning of the barley harvest when these men were crucified, and their forms were left to rot beneath the rays of the sun. The vultures by day and the jackals by night would have made quick work with these bodies but for the ceaseless guard kept by the sad mother of two of these young men. On the day they were crucified she took a rough sack-cloth blanket—she, the tender woman who had been accustomed to royal splendors, and whose sun was turning slowly to the west—and spread it on the rock, and there, day and night, week in, week out, from the beginning of the harvest till the latter rains of October began to fall, she kept her sad and sacred watch. The light had gone forever from the eyes of her sons, and from the eyes of those others who, not being her sons, were probably comrades of her boys, at least they were one in a common shame, and in her large mother's heart Rizpah found room for them all. Poor boys! what wrongs had they done? The Gibeonites had wrecked their vengeance on her hapless sons and their friends. The Gibeonites had their revenge, and Rizpah had her dead. She could not call them back to life, but she could save them from the last indignity. No beak of vulture, no tooth of jackall should touch their sacred flesh. A brief reference to the book of Psalms serves to show that the Jewish mind regarded this cruel method of leaving dead bodies unburied as a final crowning disgrace. Hear this wail from the Poet Asaph:—"O God!—The heathen are come into thine inheritance; The holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy Saints unto the beasts of the earth." So Rizpah, once the consort of a King, keeps vigil day and night to save her sons and their gallant companions from this last disgrace. What a picture of motherly devotion! If Rizpah was such a mother to the dead what a mother she must have been to the living. Here is a song for the poet, better than his landings of kings and warriors. Here is a subject for the artist far more worthy of his skill than the portraits of Popes, or Saints, decked with the tiara of authority, or surrounded with the nimbus of imaginary sanctity. Oh Artist! paint us a picture of Rizpah's vigil and we will stand before it, and feed our gratitude to God for his gift to men, the gift of a mother's ceaseless love.

Sunday School Teacher—"Miss Fanny, what are we to learn from the parable of the wise and foolish virgins?"

Miss Fanny (aged ten years)—"That we are always to be on the lookout for the coming of the bridegroom."—[Texas Sitings.

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Will Man Ever Fly?

The giant birds of geology, such as the *diornis*, the extinct moa of New-Zealand some of which stood more than ten feet high were most of them wingless, just as still the great ostrich is a running, not a flying, bird. The albatrosses and the condors, giants among the winged fowl of the present day, are only relatively gigantic, since the weights of their bodies are trifling compared with those of human beings, and their lofty flights even if matched by the ascending powers of balloons, are unsuited to the respiratory faculties of man.

Helmholtz has observed that, though many small birds which are granivorous fly swiftly, the great birds that are potent on the wing are fish and flesh eaters, not needing extensive organs of digestion for their concentrated food. He thinks it therefore probable that in the model of the great Alpine eagle nature has attained the utmost limit that can be attained, with muscles for the working organs and conditions of nourishment as favorable as possible for the size of a creature which is to raise itself by wings and maintain itself for any time high in the air.

Under these circumstances he concludes that it is scarcely to be considered probable that man, with the most skillfully contrived mechanism, to be moved by his own muscular power, would ever be able to raise his own weight into the air and sustain it there for any time worth speaking of. When vessels filled with gas lighter than air are employed to supply the lifting power, and yet other vessels are employed with some stored force to take the place of our own muscular resources, the consequential increase of bulk and weight in the complex machine must indeed greatly discourage human aspirations and longings for the invention of artificial wings.

The desire involved, however little it may be formulated, in those aspirations, is for the capacity to cleave the air like a merlin or to skim over the waters like a swift, and for ability to do this or something like it freely on the impulse of the moment, not after consultation with the gas works and a fee to the electrical engineer.

Wife—I'm writing to Mrs. Van Cortlandt Lake, dear; shall I put in any word from you?

Husband—That woman makes me deadly tired. Give her my kindest regards, of course.

Physician—"Now, Mrs. Smalltalk, will you let me look at your tongue?" Mrs. Smalltalk (two minutes later)—"Well, doctor, why in the world don't you look at my tongue, if you want to, instead of writing away like a newspaper editor? How long do you expect I am going to sit here with my mouth open?" Physician—"Just one moment more, please, madam. I only wanted you to keep still long enough so that I could write the prescription."