

THE TREATMENT OF CHRONIC BRIGHT'S DISEASE.

Dr. Dana, of Portland, Me., concludes a carefully-prepared paper (*Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*) with the following practical suggestions :

1. One of the most important indications is to avert or reduce hyperemia and inflammation of the kidneys. With this end in view a uniform and sufficient warmth of the surface of the body should be maintained. In this disease, and also where predisposition to it exists, when the large amount of blood normally present in the cutaneous capillaries is reduced by chilliness of the surface, a corresponding hyperemia of the renal capillaries is very likely to occur. In a case recently under my observation, of the typical parenchymatous nephritis form, the man owned and steadily worked upon a farm located upon a narrow neck of land, projecting out from the Maine coast into the sea, and commonly swept by cold and damp winds, often sudden and severe. Frequently, when covered with profuse perspiration, his skin would become chilled with the wind, and he had himself noticed an apparent connection between these experiences and the development of his trouble. A moderately warm and equable climate is a great advantage. A sufferer from this disease, who is so favorably circumstanced as to be able to avail himself of different climates for different seasons of the year, so that he can have the benefit of free out-of-door life all the year round without risk of becoming chilled, has his chances of prolonged and comparatively comfortable life thereby greatly increased. Woolen undergarments should be worn thick enough to insure warmth without inducing sweating. A flannel night-gown is advisable in cold weather. In acute exacerbations of the disease, attended with increased heat, the patient should be kept in bed, between blankets, for days, or weeks. The importance of maintaining a uniform warmth of skin in this affection does not seem to be fully appreciated by the average practitioner. Local applications to the lumbar regions are useful, such as leeching or cupping, followed by warm fomentations, especially when a sense of heat and heaviness has arisen, with scanty secretion of urine. I have found advantage in large packs. Several thicknesses of towels may be used, large enough to thoroughly envelop the small of the back and come round somewhat freely upon the abdomen. These should be rung out in tepid water, covered with oiled silk or impervious paper, and bound firmly on with a flannel swathe. A small blanket, folded once, may then be wrapped and firmly pinned round the body below the waist. These, having been worn for the night, are removed in the morning, the skin is sponged with cold water, and rubbed dry, and a flannel swathe is worn for the day. Mild diluent diuretics are sometimes called for.

2. A second indication is to unload the obstructed uriniferous tubules of their accumulations.

The thrown-off and altered epithelial cells, transuded fibrines, extravasated corpuscles, and fatty debris, sometimes in the form of casts, frequently occlude the tubules, and add to the existing disability of the kidneys. Simple diluents and mild diuretics are then needed, such as cream-of-tartar water, and pure natural waters like the Poland spring water. They should be drunk freely, and, by preference, on an empty stomach, so as to be quickly absorbed and passed off through the kidneys.

3. A third indication is to build up the blood and promote nutrition. Whether, or not, the blood is ever the starting-point of the morbid process in the system it is certainly true that the peculiar anemic look of the patient is often the first thing that arouses in the mind of the physician a suspicion of the true nature of the disease, while, in the advanced stage, the blood is constantly found impoverished and depraved to the last degree, and utterly unfit to maintain healthy nutrition. Of the large class of building-up remedies I will mention, as specially useful, the *mistura ferri et ammonii acetatis*, cod-liver oil, and malt. Judicious and persistent use must be made of this class of remedies.

4. A fourth indication is to improve the condition of the nerve centers. The importance of this indication is specially plain in the cirrhotic form of the disease occurring in painters and others who have been exposed to poisoning by lead. Here the iodide of potassium, the dose of ten to twenty grains, conveniently administered in half a tumblerful of Vichy water, may be given three times a day for long periods of time, with markedly good results. The same method is applicable to cases of syphilitic origin, or occurring in systems specifically infected. In such cases the corrosive chloride of mercury in small doses may be substituted for the iodide of potassium for the period of a few weeks, from time to time, with advantage. In some of the cirrhotic cases of unknown origin, I have found great benefit from the use of the chloride of gold and sodium, as suggested by Bartholow, in the average dose of the twelfth of a grain in pill form, after each meal. I have seen periods of marked improvement of general condition and special relief of distressing nervous symptoms follow its use. Arsenic, in small doses, and the hypophosphites are sometimes useful.

5. The fifth indication is to promote the elimination of urea from the blood. In order to appreciate the importance of this indication we have only to remember that uremia constitutes the chief danger of the disease, a fatal apoplectic seizure being occasionally its first revelation; or, to call to mind the fearful sufferings of the paroxysms of uremic dyspnea, uremic headaches, and uremic convulsions. Here we must mainly rely upon vicarious evacuations by the skin and bowels, and I believe that sudorifics are the most valuable class of remedies. Profuse diaphoresis may be induced by hot air and hot vapor-baths, and by