

As regards the class of cases in which the morphia is useful: it gives the most striking relief in angina with diseased coronary arteries, &c., in neuralgic distress from intrathoracic tumour, and in mitral regurgitation. It is very valuable also in small doses in so-called "irritable heart," whether this be due to weakness of the organ or instability of its nerves. It is less useful in disease of the aortic valves, and I think it is less valuable in mitral obstruction than in mitral regurgitation. In aortic disease, however, where the heart is big and pumping, it gives much ease.

I need not detail any cases in which I have used the morphia, as they would not make my statements any the clearer; their farther confirmation must come from the profession; and I now leave the matter in the hands of my brethren, feeling assured that before long the injection of morphia will be a common remedy in cases of disease of the heart.

Ether as a Stimulant-Sedative in the Neuroses of the Aged.

From the Practitioner.—(Concluded.)

The practice of ether inhalation, as above described, has been steadily continued by Sir F. Pollock up to the present time, and the general facts observable are the following:—Both his physical and mental health may be called magnificent, considering his advanced years. The pulse is regular and firm, of medium tension, and keeps very nearly to the standard of eighty; it does not appear to vary materially either during or after an inhalation. Not merely can gastric spasm and flatulence be relieved with the same instantaneous certainty as at first, but the tendency to such affections has evidently and notably diminished. Sleep is obtained, at intervals, to the amount of, perhaps, eleven hours out of the twenty-four, including a regular mid-day siesta. As is common in advanced age, not much solid food is taken; but a moderate amount of alcoholic liquids (brandy and sherry) are consumed, in small doses. The appetite for solids is visibly diminished when any considerable amount of ether has been inhaled shortly before a meal. There is not the smallest impairment of muscular co-ordination proper; and in regard to this it may be mentioned that the handwriting is singularly vigorous and perfect. So free are the muscles from tremor that till quite lately Sir Frederick could balance a full wine-glass on the backs of his closed fingers and lift to his lips without spilling, and even now the hand can be held out for a long time without a visible shake. At present the inhalations

are very frequently taken, and a variable quantity of ether, amounting sometimes to several ounces in a day, is used: but of course it is impossible to calculate how much of this enters the blood. We may conclude this detail of the facts observed by stating that a few extra whiffs, of exceptional vigour, produce slight flushing of the face, and a feeling of fulness in the nasal mucous membrane.

[Upon the facts of the above very interesting case we shall base a few remarks on the use of stimulants in the nervous malaise from which aged persons so frequently suffer. It is rather singular that more detailed and specific consideration has not been given, in medical treatises, to the management of the very troublesome neuroses of old age. Not to mention the severe and intractable neuralgias which occasionally make the last years of a long life miserable, there are minor nervous evils which more commonly beset the aged. The majority of very old people find it difficult or impossible to sleep continuously for any considerable length of time; and though, doubtless this is of the less consequence because but little muscular exercise is taken, yet it is often distressing, and by its mental no less than its directly physical effects tends to unhinge the nervous system and to destroy the calm of life. Spasmodic affections of the stomach and intestines also frequently cause great misery to old persons, and inflict further mischief by rendering the problem of their nutrition more difficult. It seems to us that for these troubles, which are so often spoken of as inevitable, the aged have a right to ask relief; and what is more important, they are generally pretty sure to attempt to get it. By coarse-fibred or uneducated persons, more especially, the relief may be sought in alcohol; and under the idea that one cannot have too much of a good thing the sufferer may contract habits of sottish excess. We have so recently proclaimed, however, our decided objection to the use of alcohol for the relief of the nervous miseries of adolescent and of middle life, that we may venture, without fear of being misunderstood, to say here that we have much less objection to the use of alcohol as a sedative in old age than during any portion of the time in which the disturbing influence of the sexual functions is felt by the organism; for it does not present a title of the seductions to the excess in the former case which does in the self-conscious condition of the organism which exists during sexual life. Still one would prefer to be armed with a better weapon against the miseries of old age. Tobacco has the two great defects that women cannot use it, and that elderly men, if they have not smoked before, often fail to take to it comfortably at an advanced