

Rectal Alimentation.

Edsall points out the insufficiency of rectal alimentation in keeping up the nutrition of the body, and illustrates it with a carefully observed case. He does not wish to say that it is of little value, for it is sometimes our only resource, but it is only an unsatisfactory makeshift at best by which we can temporarily reduce tissue loss and tide a patient over a period during which the stomach is becoming equal to reception of food, or who is being prepared for operation for removal of mechanical difficulties interfering in taking food by the mouth.—*Jour. A. M. A.*

Alcohol in the Acute Stage of Pneumonia.

It is now accepted that alcohol is a food as well as a stimulant. As a food, it may be employed to replace in part, or to supplement, the food already mentioned. I believe it can be resorted to with advantage much earlier than it is usually administered. With the passing of the inflammatory theory of pneumonia we need not be deterred from its use by the fear of aggravating the local trouble. On the contrary, its distinctly anti-germic property aids in inhibiting the local bacterial activity. As to its antidotal action upon the poison already in the blood, there is much favorable clinical evidence. Many instances are on record in which patients almost *in extremis* have been rescued by the use of twenty or thirty ounces of brandy or whiskey in twenty-four hours. Analogy also points in the same direction. The most efficient treatment yet employed for the bite of venomous reptiles consists in the administration of enormous doses of alcohol, and the same is true of poisoning with carbolic acid.

Alcohol may be employed tentatively at any stage in pneumonia. Its action will be shown to be beneficial if twenty minutes after the dose is taken the pulse becomes less frequent and of greater volume, and the respiration slower and deeper. The duration of the betterment is the key to the amount and the frequency of the dosage. In the case of drunkards we must remember that alcoholic stimulation begins only when the quantity given exceeds the habitual allowance in health. Much of the frightful mortality of pneumonia in heavy drinkers is doubtless due to the fact that the depressing effect of the disease too often coincides with the prostration caused by the withdrawal of a large part of the alcohol that has become a necessity of their existence. Our first duty in the case of an "alcoholic" with pneumonia is to see that he gets his full daily measure of spirits. The amount of stimulation to be employed is an after consideration.—*Andrew H. Smith, in International Medical Magazine.*