

NOTES ON URINALYSIS.

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The immense importance, diagnostically and prognostically, of an analysis, qualitative and quantitative, of the urinary secretion being now universally recognized, chemists and clinicians alike have expended much thought and time in experimentation, in devising simple and reliable tests suitable for use by the general practitioner, not possessing special technical skill nor laboratory facilities, and who might not always have at hand the services of a skilled chemist.

Specific Gravity.—For taking specific gravity, a series of beads thrown into a small quantity of the liquid constitute the simplest and most rapid method, and it is hardly possible to conceive anything better, no special vessel being required.

Albumin.—For albumin, the picric acid and heat test, as recommended by Johnston, is most valuable, and is as simple as any other, with the advantage of portability, in the dry state, and independence of the corrosive nitric acid, so destructive to clothing and instruments. The special committee on albumin tests of the Clinical Society of London reported, in 1886, that no one of the tests heretofore proposed had any marked excellence over all others, and that the nitric acid was as good as any.* The only method practically available for the quantitative estimation of albumin is the approximative one of measuring the depth of the deposited opaque layer; for this purpose, graduated glass tubes are now procurable from the dealers in chemical apparatus. The gravimetric and optical processes, requiring time, skill and special appliances, are unsuitable for ordinary clinical work.

Glucose.—It is in the search for saccharine matter, probably, that most difficulties and mistakes have occurred. Perusal of the text-books and current medical literature is somewhat confusing, and would almost lead one to suppose that the discovery and identification of glucose in urine were matters of much difficulty and uncertainty, and that the path of the uro-analyst was

* Vide Millard, N. Y. Medical Record, April 30, 1887.