

THE CANADA LANCET.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SCIENCE,
CRITICISM AND NEWS.

VOL. XXIII.] TORONTO, JUNE, 1891. [No. 10.]

Original Communications.

ON THE TREATMENT OF DIABETES.*

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Mr. President and Gentlemen.—The constant desire that must exist in the mind of every general practitioner to find some remedy or remedies for the cure of Diabetes Mellitus, has prompted me to bring before you the results that I have obtained with one or two comparatively new remedies. Not because I believe that any one of these remedies that I am about to speak of will prove curative in all cases, but because I think that one at least possesses advantages over those more commonly in use, in being perfectly harmless when pushed, and unirritating to any stomach.

Whether diabetes is the result of cold, as has been shown by Pieper of Greifswald, or of a certain condition existing in the liver, as is claimed by Zimmer, or from the production of too small an amount of carbonic acid in the tissues, or from any other cause, the symptoms as we all know are much the same, viz., loss of flesh with increased appetite, increased thirst, polyuria and glycosuria. And we all know further, that these symptoms are more or less relievable by the avoidance of all articles of diet which contain starch or sugar. As we might expect, if we exclude the carbohydrates, less sugar will be found in the urine, if only from the fact that the glycogenic function of the liver must be influenced by the composition of its blood supply.

The difficulty, however, of inducing patients to restrain themselves in these particulars, is one of the greatest difficulties experienced in the treatment of these cases, as, from the very nature of the symptoms, we see that we must ask our pa-

tients to desist not only from partaking of those things for which they have a natural liking, but from those, the desire for which is greatly increased, by the very disease that we propose to treat. Therefore, if it is possible by any means to treat these cases without restricting their diet, we will have succeeded in overcoming one of the greatest difficulties that we have to contend with. Nor can any treatment be said to be very satisfactory, until we have succeeded in producing our best results by the exhibition of the remedy under the ordinary every-day circumstances, under which our patient exists. For otherwise there is little or no proof that that good obtained is not the result merely of the restricted diet, knowing as we do that in a great many cases this of itself is sufficient to produce the most beneficial change.

Now, speaking of diabetes generally, that is, without taking any note of the cause in any particular patient, the chief means which it is generally conceded we have at our disposal with which to control the disease are—diet and opium. The first cannot be continued for any length of time without producing such disgust in the mind of our patient, that it is eventually abandoned. The second, if continued long enough, must result in the acquirement of a habit which eventually drags our patient down to the miserable condition of a hopelessly confirmed opium eater, and at all times increases the probability of producing that most dangerous of all symptoms in this disease—diabetic coma; a condition which it has seemed to me may result from a combination of the acetone with urea, when that urea would, under other circumstances, have been found alone. It is easily seen, then, how great the value of a remedy for diabetes would be that had none of these objections.

The first remedy that I would particularly draw your attention to is the *Rhus Aromatica*. This is the common fragrant or sweet sumach, or "stink bush," which grows in this country and the United States, and must be well known to many of you. It is a shrub, about two to six feet high, with a yellow flowering top, and grows on high rocky soil. The preparation that I have used is a fluid extract of the bark of the roots, made by Messrs. Parke, Davis & Co., of Detroit.

My attention was first drawn to this plant by reading an article on its uses, published by J. T.

* Read before the Ontario Med. Association, June, 1890.