

different. Patients with failing compensation, edema and pronounced arrhythmia, habituated to the use of alcohol, can drop it suddenly and completely and benefit enormously thereby. His experience with 60 cases has been decidedly favorable to the absolute suppression of alcohol in case of any tendency to cardiac incompetency, even for hard drinkers, and Hernung says the same from an experience with 1,450 cases. Galli comments on the idea that alcohol gives strength, citing researches which prove that it is detrimental to literary work and that soldiers and others taking alcohol, even in small amounts, feel fatigue more readily. Galli's own special research at Baccelli's clinic has demonstrated that alcohol has a tendency to induce dilatation of the heart while lowering the blood pressure. This is noticeable even in healthy persons. Roentgen examination by the orthodiagraphic method shows that the diameter of the heart may increase by 2 cm. in the course of a few hours, even when the patient is in complete repose. The sphygmomanometer and tonometer show that during the first 10 minutes the blood pressure rises, but then it falls, the difference in the pressure reaching 30 mm. at times. It is this first rise in the blood pressure which has been the cause of the general and mistaken impression in regard to the strengthening action of alcohol, and has led to the abuse of small doses of alcohol in physical and nervous exhaustion or depression from any cause. This abuse forms a grave vicious circle, as larger and larger doses are required each time to produce the desired effect. Even when a stimulant is really needed the physician should not use alcohol, but some other tonic or some external manipulation which would answer the same purpose. If physicians would do this, they would aid greatly in abolishing the popular prejudice in regard to the tonic action of alcohol and further the solution of the great and serious problem of alcoholism. The need of a stimulant is not so frequent as many suppose. In persons addicted to the use of alcohol the supposed need is merely the effect of the depression resulting from the preceding dose. Suppression of alcohol raises the resisting powers so that operations can frequently be undertaken which had little prospect of success before. Even in elderly persons with heart affections, Galli has been able to withdraw as much as 2,400 gm. of effusion from the pleura and then have the patient stand for orthodiagnostic examination, without any modification in the pulse or respiration or tendency to faint. In cardiovascular affections, the preceding use of alco-