

the more active forms of Iron give better results than the milder salts, and it is therefore of the greater importance to observe whether, for example, headache occurs after each dose of the medicine, whether constipation to an increasing degree is caused, and particularly whether the amount of albumen in the urine remains constant, increases, or diminishes.

The preparation which is known as "Blaud's Pills," in which the Iron is presented in an active form, very frequently suits patients who cannot take other forms of the metal, but at the same time it often fails to yield as good results, in renal cases, as the perchloride of Iron generally gives. It is an old-fashioned rule to give to such patients the solution of Perchloride of Iron in large doses, but the Nurse should remember that this should always be administered well diluted with water. If the patient suffers from headaches, the doctor will probably prescribe a blue pill to be taken occasionally, and this will relieve this tiresome symptom as a rule, but requires to be given more frequently in some cases than in others. If the medicine causes nausea, or even vomiting, this can often be obviated by giving it with a teaspoonful of glycerine to each dose of the mixture. When it causes constipation, appropriate medicines will doubtless be ordered by the doctor. But the Nurse should remember that Iron in any form always agrees better, and always gives rise to less disturbances, if it be administered either with or soon after a meal, because in that case it is more rapidly absorbed into the system; and, especially if it be in an astringent form, it sets up less irritation in the stomach if it thus becomes mixed with food. As a general rule, Iron is also, even when taken in the form of pills, most quickly absorbed if it is given with plenty of water, the theory being that the fluid separates the grains of the salt, and so enables these to be taken up in the finest state of division.

Another medicine which is comparatively little used at the present day, but which, formerly, was a favourite remedy in kidney disease, is one of the preparations of Lead. It is a well-known fact that the salts of this metal diminish the amount of albumen which is thrown off from the kidneys in cases of disease, and they therefore have been employed in the belief that kidney disease could be cured by their means. It is beyond dispute that many patients improve to some extent in general health while taking Lead, but at the

same time it is a curious and interesting fact that in such cases an attack of Gout may suddenly occur, and it is open to question whether this may not be due to the use of the drug.

The frequency with which Gout occurs amongst workers in Lead, or those who show signs of poisoning by the metal, has of late years made its preparations more rarely employed than formerly. Should it be prescribed, however, for kidney or for any other disease, the Nurse should remember the facility with which some patients exhibit symptoms of poisoning, and should at once report to the doctor any complaint of joint pains made by the patient, or if constipation occurs, or slight abdominal colicky pains. Mercury, again, in former days was often prescribed in cases of kidney disease. The metal fell into disrepute some fifty years ago in consequence of the ill effects which followed its excessive and empirical use, and it has not, therefore, until recently, been again employed to any extent in the treatment of these patients. But in those who are suffering from extreme dropsy due to renal disease, Mercury is often prescribed now, and perhaps no other drug gives equally valuable results. When this drug, then, is given, the Nurse must watch most carefully for signs of mercurial poisoning; the first and most marked of which consists of soreness and softening of the gums at the edge of the teeth, together with an increased flow of saliva. The occurrence of such symptoms should be immediately reported to the doctor, who will probably order either a diminution of the dose or the discontinuance of the medicine. There is no doubt that mercury accumulates to a large extent in the tissues of the body before it causes poisonous symptoms, so that when these effects do occur they may rapidly increase in intensity. The importance of careful observation on the part of the Nurse is therefore apparent. The drug to which allusion has been made, as almost prohibited in the treatment of kidney disease, is Opium. Its effect upon all the tissues is practically governed by that which it exerts upon the brain and nervous system. Its power of relieving pain is due to the fact that in small doses it soothes, and in large doses it paralyses, the nerve centres. In the former, therefore, it relieves pain by dulling acute sensation; in the latter it causes death by checking the action of the lungs and then of the heart.

*(To be continued.)*

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