

actively stimulated according to the severity of the renal symptoms. There is perhaps no other therapeutic agent so promptly effective when the kidneys are congested as hot fomentations over the lumbar regions. These compresses should be large enough to half encircle the body, and may extend from the scapulæ to the hips. Five or six thicknesses of flannel or twice as many folds of cheese-cloth wrung out of hot water will serve the purpose well.

To wring out one of these compresses from water piping hot has often puzzled the inexperienced nurse, and some, indeed, so regardless of their own comfort and safety in their anxiety for the patient, have suffered their hands to be blistered in doing it. If the compress be laid in the middle of a dry towel, and the latter twisted by taking hold of the ends the wringing process may be done without scalding the fingers. It is perhaps needless to say that the application should not be so hot as to blister the patient's back, and his complaints and interjections will usually furnish sufficient admonition in that direction. Sometimes, however, these hot fomentations are applied to young children, and to persons who are unconscious. A word to the wise should be sufficient.

Hot drinks are doubly beneficial in acute renal congestion; they stimulate the action of the skin, and they serve to "flush out" the kidneys. It is important too that any chilling of the surface be avoided. Cold applications as a rule are not indicated, though in a vigorous person with strong pulse and dry skin it is a good plan to wrap such a one in a sheet wrung out of cold water, and over this place several dry blankets. The reaction is usually very prompt, and free sweating follows.

The bowels must be kept open by laxatives, which do not irritate the kidneys. Nothing is better, probably, than small doses of Epsom or Rochelle salts frequently repeated.

The medicines actually necessary in this condition are not numerous, although many drugs have been used for acute nephritis. The physician will probably prescribe pilocarpin for its diaphoretic effect. It is best given hypodermically, in small doses at first, gradually increased until the desired result—copious perspiration—is obtained. In four or five minutes after the hypodermic injection of a dose of pilocarpin, the patient will begin to spit, for it must be known that this drug is a powerful sialagogue. Sometimes a pint of saliva will be ejected or flow from the mouth in the ten minutes following the administration of a full dose of pilocarpin. If the dose is too great there may be produced such a shock upon the nervous system as to result in a chill and vomiting.

(To be continued.)

Medical Matters.

OPIUM POISONING



ONE of the most common forms of poisoning is, undoubtedly, that by some preparation of opium. The routine method of treatment from the earliest times has been to keep the patient constantly moving until the lethargy caused by the drug had worn off. In recent times, a great advance has been made in the success of treatment by the discovery that belladonna, though itself poisonous, is an effective antidote to opium. Within the last two years, experiments have been made in different parts of the world to test the efficiency of permanganate of potash as an antidote to opium, and in the popular form of Condy's Fluid this drug has been administered in various cases of opium poisoning with rapid effect and much success. One of the most recent cases is related in a Servian contemporary—that of a child, two and a-half years old, who accidentally swallowed about a teaspoonful of German laudanum. A teaspoonful of Condy's Fluid was given to the patient every hour, and although the case appeared to be nearly hopeless, fifteen hours after the poisoning, the boy was able to play with other children, although looking somewhat pale and ill; and it is stated that on the following day he had quite recovered. There are now a large number of cases on record in which equal success has been obtained, and the remedy has the great advantage of being itself perfectly harmless, so that while it might in any case of opium poisoning do great good, it could not, at any rate, do any harm.

OPERATIONS FOR CANCER.

CONSIDERABLE attention has recently been given to the suggestion that in certain cases of cancer of the breast which appear to be beyond operative measures, the ovaries should be removed and thyroid extract administered. Cases have been recorded in which this treatment appeared to have the effect not only of checking the progress of the disease, but, apparently, also of bringing about a cure. Removal of the ovaries, for whatever reason

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)