

Medical Matters.

THE X RAYS IN PHTHISIS.



WE have, in this column, kept our readers informed concerning the results thus far achieved by the X rays in the treatment of various diseases. Briefly, the facts narrated show that prolonged exposure of the skin to these rays cause, first, patches of congestion and then of ulceration of the skin, and that it appears possible that changes are also produced in the deeper tissues. Experiments have been made, with the greatest care and completeness, in various countries, in the hope that it might be found that the action of the rays caused the destruction of unhealthy tissues in diseased organs. An article recently published in a French contemporary will go far to encourage observers elsewhere to continue their investigations in this direction. It is chiefly devoted to a description of the effects apparently produced by these rays upon a woman twenty-two years of age who was suffering from very acute and rapidly spreading tuberculosis of the lungs. There was a large cavity at the right apex, the whole of the right lung was much diseased, the left lung showed similar tubercular mischief, and the sputum was loaded with the bacilli of tubercle. Ordinary medicinal treatment produced no effect, the patient rapidly progressed from bad to worse, and at last appeared to be in a hopeless condition. All drugs were then discontinued and the Röntgen rays were applied, much to the patient's resentment; and during the first fortnight her general condition undoubtedly became worse. After the eighth application, the temperature fell suddenly, though it rose again to a considerable degree. After the end of a fortnight, a slight but decided improvement was noted at the apex of the right lung; and for a month afterwards the rays were used from behind, twice a day, instead of from the front. The results were certainly remarkable; the cough and expectoration diminished, the bacilli almost completely disappeared, and the cavities in both lungs appeared to dry up. The general weakness however continued, and ulceration in the skin took place over the surfaces exposed to the rays. These were there-

fore discontinued, and during the next three weeks great general improvement took place; the patient regained her appetite; the breathing became deeper and easier; and the lungs appeared to completely heal. The results are sufficiently remarkable to make it certain that the remedy will be most carefully employed and tested in similar cases in this country. But, at the same time, it is to be hoped that the pitiable mistake made at the time of the Koch "cure" will not be repeated, and that the public may not be led to entertain false hopes as to every case of consumption being curable.

CARBOLIC ACID FOR TETANUS.

AN interesting case is reported in an Italian contemporary of a boy aged sixteen who was kicked on the foot by a horse; a large contused wound being produced, which was dressed with a piece of rag, a leaf, and wax-plaster. Five days later, symptoms of tetanus showed themselves, and the boy was taken to a hospital. The wounded part was at once excised and thoroughly cleansed with carbolic acid and iodoform. Bromide and chloral were given internally and an injection of one per cent. of carbolic solution was given every two hours. Two days afterwards, the boy could open his mouth a little, but four days later the tetanic contractions still occurred, and the carbolic injections were given every hour. By the end of another fortnight, the boy was well, but the injections were continued altogether for one month; and five hundred were given in all. It appears that other cases have occurred in Italy in which treatment by carbolic acid has proved to be successful. It is specially noted, in this case, that no bad results or poisonous symptoms followed the treatment; and, considering the large quantity of carbolic acid which was administered, the fact is certainly noteworthy. It is stated that in this case the bacillus of tetanus was found in the wound; and the treatment immediately adopted of removing so much of the injured tissue was probably most efficacious, in diminishing the virulence of the disease. The manner in which tetanus is due to the want of cleanliness and in which it can be prevented by strict antiseptic precautions, if these be adopted in time, is well recognised, especially in military surgery, in which, formerly, an enormous number of deaths after operation were due to this disease.

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