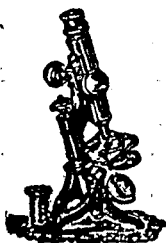


Medical Matters.

THE NEW LIGHT BATH TREATMENT.



The Copenhagen correspondent of the *Lancet* gives an interesting description of the new light-bath treatment for cardiac and other chronic diseases carried out at the Finzen Medical Light Institute of Copenhagen. On the occasion of the inauguration of the new clinical building the technique of the treatment was described by Dr. A. Oigaard. Two large carbon arc lamps are used, each of 75 ampères and from 50 to 55 volts. They are placed 48 centimetres distant from one another and may be lowered or raised simultaneously according to the position, whether erect or recumbent, of the patient. The patient places himself as near as possible to the source of light, usually at a distance of from 50 to 60 centimetres, where the temperature is about 40 degrees C. measured by the bright-bulb thermometer. During the treatment the patient wears only a sort of bathing drawers, slippers, a broad-brimmed straw hat with a linen veil and dark goggles. During the first 10 or 20 minutes the patient is in the standing position, and turns from time to time in order to obtain a uniform action of the light over the whole surface of the body. The remaining 10 (or more) minutes of the séance are passed by the patient on a couch, the position of which is varied by the attendant. A shower bath finishes the treatment. The duration of a single treatment is, on an average, about half an hour. The number of séances going to make up a course is about nine; two séances are given in a week. The first objective effect of the light bath is erythema, the onset of which may be accompanied by slight but never disagreeable rigors and a slight rise of temperature. In three female patients the temperature, however, rose as high as 40.4 degrees C. On the day following the treatment the temperature was always normal. As to the results, the following statements apply to the 159 out-patients treated at the Institute in 1907. Nearly all of them were treated exclusively by light baths, and most of them were able to follow their usual occupation during the treatment. In 34 out of 60 cases the absolute heart dulness decreased, and in 10 out of 14 cases of œdema this condition disappeared totally. The blood pressure was determined in most of the patients by means of Hill and Barnard's sphygmomanometer. It

turned out that in all cases where the pressure was abnormally high at the beginning of the treatment a decrease, and very often a considerable decrease, takes place. If the blood pressure was normal to begin with, the effect is only insignificant; in two cases there was a slight increase. The subjective effects of the treatment are a peculiar, agreeable feeling of weariness, and during the last half of the period a certain state of psychical excitation manifesting itself in a sensation of increased working power. Patients were nearly always able to sleep well during the treatment. Dr. H. Jacobæus has published his experience of the light-bath treatment in angina pectoris. Fifty-two patients were treated. In three cases the treatment had to be discontinued, while in two cases the result was negative. In 14 patients the effect was only slight or transitory. Thirty-three patients were improved; in three of these a nearly complete recovery from the symptoms maintained itself for a long period. Dr. Jacobæus thinks that the improvement obtained is due, at least chiefly, to the physiological effects of the light baths, and he expects that the light-bath treatment will also in future prove a valuable means of bringing about some degree of improvement in the majority of patients suffering from angina pectoris.

THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF TUBERCULOSIS.

Germany, thorough in most things, is thorough in its campaign against tuberculosis, and the active support of the State is given to those who are endeavouring to combat this disease. The twelfth annual conference of the German Central Committee for Combatting Tuberculosis, held in the Reichstag, was opened by the Secretary of State for the Interior, who gave an interesting account of the work of the Committee, referring especially to the establishment of advisory agencies for the benefit of sufferers in the first stages of the disease.

Professor Metner reported that the Committee had established 99 public hospitals, containing over 10,000 beds, for tuberculosis patients, besides 36 private hospitals, with 2,175 beds, so that it was now possible to treat 50,000 patients a year, and additional hospitals were in course of construction. The necessity for Imperial legislation was discussed for the establishment of homes and hospitals for the prevention and treatment of the disease. So, more and more, the rational method of coping with the disease by preventive methods is commending itself to scientists.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)