

## CONSTIPATION.

VOLUMES might be written detailing the evil effects of constipation, and yet little, comparatively, has been published upon the subject. Few affections trouble the practitioner more, yet most cases are amenable to proper treatment. Proper treatment, however, means so much, that sometimes it is, unfortunately, not possible to the poor, though even these may be made comfortable, if their work and food, and the air they breathe are not too bad. It may be laid down as a general principle that no complaint of any seriousness can be cured if constipation exist.

It may be further insisted that constipation and perfect health are not compatible. Obviously, then, the first thing to do in chronic cases, in the way of treatment, is to see that the bowels are gently moved every day. Habit and patient expectation are important, and without them a perfect cure is hardly possible. The food should be nutritious, the work moderate, and the habits of life regular. Out-of-door exercise is indispensable. Rough cereals, &c., are of a very doubtful value. A glass of water before breakfast in the morning, and plenty of fruit, are important aids.

We will now mention a few useful laxatives:—

*Cascara Sagrada.*—This improves the appetite and digestion, and increases the secretions of the gastrointestinal canal, in consequence of which it has a laxative action. In this combination of tonic and cathartic effects cascara resembles rhubarb. There is no reason to suppose that it possesses a cholagogue action in any higher degree than rhubarb (Bartholow). Dr. Ringer says "It acts promptly and without griping, and is now largely used with great advantage as a laxative, especially in cases where a drug will be required for a considerable time. As a laxative it is unparalleled. It leaves no after constipation, but quite the reverse, and larger doses are not required the longer it is taken. The dose is one or two tabloids."

*Malt Extract.*—Malt Extract forms an admirable laxative to many, and has the advantage that it is a food. It is a splendid demulcent, and can do no possible harm. The Kepler Extract of Malt may be taken in tablespoonful doses thrice daily.

*Laxative Tabloids (Vegetable).*—These are a gentle, but active, non-mercurial aperient. They contain colocynth, jalap, podophyllin, hyoscyamus, taraxacum, and peppermint.

*Cascara, Euonymin, and Nux V.*—Tabloids of this combination are in great favour with physicians, and possess obvious advantages over cascara alone, as those of the bilious temperament will readily observe.

*Anti-constipation Tabloids.*—These contain aloin, belladonna, strychnine and ipecac, and will act upon the rectum and muscular coat of the bowels as well as upon the liver. One may be taken three times every day.

*Euonymin Tabloids.*—Euonymin acts similarly to rhubarb, but more mildly. Rutherford has shown that it is a highly efficient cholagogue. Three or four tabloids may be taken three times a day.

*Rhubarb and Soda.*—This is a combination well known to nearly all. The soda prevents the rhubarb from griping, and exerts a beneficial action upon the liver. The dose is one to three tabloids.

## INHALERS AND INHALANTS.

THE simple yet effective method of promoting the absorption of certain medicaments by their volatilization and subsequent contact with the surfaces of the respiratory tract, and which is now known as "inhalation," may, for all practical application, be really considered as belonging to our end of this century. True it may be that the idea was not unknown in the days of Galen and Hippocrates, and may have been discussed even in the time of any of the Rameses, but no attempt as far as is known had been made up to our own period to bring the system into a scientific shape, either as to the method or apparatus employed. Since the diseases of the nose and nasopharynx of the larynx, the bronchi and the lungs have become respectively the sole study of eminent specialists and investigators, the number and variety of the agents used in their treatment have marvellously increased, while the diverse character of, and the ingenuity displayed in, the construction of apparatus employed for hot, cold, or atomized spray inhalations make it difficult to believe that so important an aid to the healing art should have been so long unconsidered and untried.

Inhalations may be carried out in several different ways, one of which is the dry inhalation, in which the patient inspires the air he breathes through an artificial atmosphere saturated with a certain volatile body, and which is always carried on at the normal temperature. This class of inhalations may be very conveniently called the stimulating, as distinct from the sedative or the antiseptic.

The bodies usually concerned in dry inhalation are those which exercise a tonic effect upon the surfaces and vessels over which, or through which, they may pass in the volatilized state. In this manner chiefly are used Menthol, Pinol, Eucalyptia, Terebene, and others of the aromatic series.

It is a matter of special interest at this time of the year to note that dry inhalation of a mixture of Pinol and Eucalyptia is of undoubted service, in some cases acting almost as a charm, as a palliative and often as a preventive against asthmatical attacks. Terebene, also, in some cases is a very effective addition to the Pinol and Eucalyptia where there is a strong tendency to inflammation of the bronchi. In this connection it should be remembered that the proper instrument is known very generally among medical practitioners as the Pinol-Eucalyptia Dry Inhaler.

The simplicity of this valuable little instrument is one of its best features; and the simplest description of it may be that it is a glass tube. One end of the tube is worked into the form of a mouthpiece, while the body of the tube is filled with an absorbent material which is to carry the volatile body to be inhaled, and through which the patient inspires. It can easily be carried about in the waistcoat pocket, and being coated with a chocolate-coloured wrapper, any one using it in the street may easily be mistaken as smoking a cigar.

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