

### MORE ABOUT 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 (*Ichet Zaffon*). 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, Euonymia, 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 every day, three times.

*Euonymin Tabloids.*—Euonymin acts in a manner similar 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.

### DIET IN INFANCY.

THERE can be no doubt that great advances are being made in the manner of caring for infants, simply and solely because the subject of infant dietetics is receiving due attention. Very little, for example, has been said about the quantity of water to be given a child, and it is probable that only too many infants have too little of it. Even the products of healthy digestion may harm the stomach if there be an absence of water. As perspiration, diarrhoea, wasting away, occasional fever, lessen the amount of water in the blood-vessels, the blood becomes thicker, and may form little clots in the small veins. "In the brain they lead to convulsions and defective innervation; in the limbs to oedema, or gangrene. The remedy is water in sufficient quantities"—if need be, as enemata. There is nothing among the elements so good to wash out the internal tissues with as water. It promotes tissue change, sets the excretory organs fairly under headway, relieves an over-loaded liver, and will act like a perfect charm on an irritated kidney. In laryngitis and bronchitis it liquefies viscid expectoration, and in many forms of constipation it acts beneficially.

Abstinence, on the other hand, also has its victories no less pronounced than imbibition. Dr. Jacobi says, "For some forms of acute gastro-enteritis, where vomiting and diarrhoea are excessive, the only salvation is in total abstinence for from four to eight hours. Not infrequently the turning point in the course of the threatened danger dates from the commencement of what appears to be cruel starvation."

A point the writer already quoted lays stress upon, is what sugar shall be added to cow's milk, when diluted for an infant. Now, if there be one point which is certain, it is that sugar of milk undergoes acetification quicker than cane sugar. Why, then, should physicians go out of their way to inconvenience people unnecessarily to add sugar of milk instead of cane sugar to their infant's food. Upon this subject we may say that we quite agree with a recent medical writer who declared in favour of a malt food the sugar in which is maltose.

This writer added half a teaspoonful of Malt Extract (Kepler's) to each pint of cow's milk given to his child, and, as a consequence, the youngest thrived as it had not done on anything else. The value of malt sugar is not questioned. In this consideration of simple things we would direct attention to common salt, one of the most important proximate principles man takes into his stomach. Its uses in the economy are manifold, and one-tenth of all there is of it in the system is displaced daily. Cow's milk contains more potassium than sodium, and the presence of common salt "lessens the solid coagulation of milk by either rennet or gastric juice."

"Thus, cow's milk ought never to be given without table salt, and the latter ought to be added to woman's milk when it behaves like cow's milk with regard to solid curdling and consequent indigestibility." The addition of the soluble malt preparation, as above recommended, effectually overcomes the curdling and indigestibility.

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