

shows itself, while the patient becomes drowsy, and seems more or less stupefied. The Nurse in such cases, must remember that it is of the utmost importance to keep the patient awake, in order to prevent, as far as possible, the numbing effects of the drug upon the nervous system; and so, while she would of course send immediately for medical aid, she should attempt meanwhile to make the patient vomit by the administration of some warm water, and by persuading him to put his forefinger down his throat. By this means, perhaps much of the poison might be expelled, but the measure requires to be adopted at once in order to be of any effect, because opium is very rapidly absorbed into the system, and then its dangerous effects require to be more energetically counteracted. Mustard leaves to the nape of the neck and to the calves of the legs, strong coffee drunk in considerable quantities, and the insistence upon the patient constantly walking up and down, even if he has to be supported in such exercise, are amongst the simple measures which the Nurse can employ, and perhaps to good effect, until the arrival of the Doctor. Sometimes, also, good results are obtained by making the patient take hot liquids, as these increase the activity of the skin and of the kidneys, and therefore help to eliminate from the system the poison which has been taken. The effect of Opium upon the kidneys, as has already been stated, is to check the amount of urine by numbing the activity of the renal nerves, and it has therefore been found useful in some cases of poisoning by this drug, to apply large linseed-meal poultices over the loins, so as to excite as far as possible, the activity of the kidneys. The same plan also is sometimes very effective when suppression of urine has taken place in consequence of an attack of acute congestion of one or both organs. The blood is thus drawn to the surface of the skin by the heat and moisture of the poultice, and the addition of three or four teaspoonfuls of turpentine, sprinkled freely over the linseed-meal of the poultice, increases the counter-irritation, and therefore adds to the efficacy of the method. When patients suffer from the heavy weight in the lumbar regions, of which many kidney cases complain, and which is due to congestion and swelling of the organ, the same common-sense treatment is generally most beneficial. In former days, such patients would have been bled, and the removal of even a little blood from the system

undoubtedly may relieve the tension in the kidney vessels. Now-a-days, those practitioners who employ cupping over the loins in cases of acute kidney diseases, even when this is known as "dry cupping"—that is to say, no blood being actually removed—often obtain most valuable effects.

The next system of treatment which the Nurse may be required to carry out in cases of kidney disease, consists of the administration of Baths. It is curious how little attention is paid to this matter at the present day; especially when it is remembered that a large part of the treatment of disease in former days depended upon the carefulness with which baths were given. What is prescribed as a "cold bath" is water of the temperature of 60° F., which may perhaps be directed to be reduced, by means of the addition of ice, to a temperature of, say, 34° or 33° F. A "tepid bath" should contain water at a temperature of from 85° to 90° F. A "warm or hot bath" means water from 96° to 115° F. If the bath is ordered to be given for any stated period of time, it is, unless instructions are definitely given to the contrary, always understood to mean that the temperature is to be maintained at the same degree throughout the immersion of the patient, a fact which is unfortunately often forgotten, so that a patient may be put into a "warm," and taken out of a "cold" bath.

The "vapour bath," however, is that which is most commonly ordered in cases of kidney disease, and its object is to so act upon the skin as to increase the activity of its excretion; and thus by making the patient perspire freely to relieve the kidneys of a certain amount of their work, and so afford them the physiological rest which is so essential a part of the treatment of disease. There are many ingenious devices for administering vapour baths, and nearly every Hospital has its own particular variety, but the chief rules for the Nurse to remember in every case is that the pipe through which the hot air is introduced into the bed, should not be allowed to touch the patient's skin, as severe blisters have been known to be caused by carelessness in this matter; the bed must be protected by means of waterproof sheeting, and every care must be taken that the patient does not become chilled after his excessive perspiration; while if he becomes at all faint, stimulants may be immediately needed.

*(To be continued.)*

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