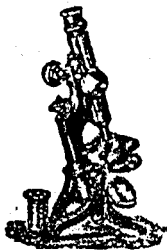


## Medical Matters.

### INTEMPERANCE AND BRAIN DISEASE.



THE close connection which exists between alcoholic intemperance and mental disease is well known, and it is usual to describe one special form of Insanity as due to alcoholic poisoning, beyond that form of brain disorder which is popularly known as Delirium Tremens. It is shown by statistics that no less than 2,400 patients are annually admitted into English asylums suffering from this form of alcoholic insanity; and that, while drink is the cause of brain disease in more than one-fifth of insane male patients, it originates the mischief in only one-twelfth of the women similarly afflicted. It is generally believed by experts that from 14 to 18 per cent. of patients suffering from insanity have been brought to that condition by intemperance. When it is remembered that the consequences of alcoholism are not confined to the victims alone, but are transmitted from generation to generation, the national importance of the subject becomes manifest. For it is a fact, amply proved by reliable figures, that no less than half the total number of idiots and imbecile children are the offspring of habitual drunkards. It is, perhaps, a fortunate provision of Nature that the remaining children of such parents usually die out from epilepsy, insanity, or other nervous disorders, proving that alcohol exercises not only a specially destructive effect upon the nerve tissues of those who take it to excess, but even upon the nervous organisation of their children. The question of heredity in drunkenness is one which deserves to be most carefully investigated, because statistics seem to show that some 60 per cent. of drunkards have an hereditary tendency to that habit, and that therefore the conclusion to which medical men are so generally coming at the present day—that alcoholism is as much a disease as consumption or gout—is strongly founded. With the improvement of education and the spread of temperance, there is much promise for the future, not only that those who are free from any hereditary taint will not take immoderate quantities of alcohol, but also that those who are hereditarily inclined to do so may be so trained as to become total abstainers. One fact, at any rate, is certain—that when there is

any such hereditary inclination, total abstinence affords the only possible chance of safety.

### INCURABLE DEAFNESS.

A BELGIAN physician is at present advocating, with some success, the use of compressed air-baths by persons who are, apparently, incurably deaf, and he claims that in more than one-third of such cases he has effected a complete cure, while a marked improvement in hearing is attainable in nine cases out of ten. He quotes a number of instances in which the patients, after being in the air-bath, became cured of chronic diseases of the ear, and were not only improved in hearing but were also cured of various chronic discharges from the tympanic membrane, or the outer ear-canal. The treatment, doubtless, will be carefully tested in this country, and the results will be awaited with much interest by a large section of the population.

### CONSUMPTION.

A VALUABLE article has recently been published in a French contemporary, dealing with the duration of Phthisis; for it is well known that while some cases rapidly progress from bad to worse, others, under the same treatment, are not only kept alive, but even, apparently, have the disease checked. It is shown that, as a rule, when there is a strumous family history, the course of Phthisis is very rapid, the patient suffering from what used formerly to be known as "galloping consumption." On the other hand, persons suffering from a rheumatic taint, and those beyond the age of 40, frequently suffer from the form known as Fibroid Phthisis, in which the progress of the disease is always long, and in many cases appears to be altogether checked. The usefulness of good Cod Liver Oil in these patients is pointed out in order to emphasise the undoubted harm which is caused by the same material, when improperly purified; because this, in many cases, causes symptoms of blood poisoning, with rapid failure of the health. This fact is not sufficiently known, although it is well recognised by specialists, and it cannot be too strongly pointed out that to be of any value in the treatment of consumption, cod liver oil must be most carefully prepared and most absolutely pure.

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