

compelled to leave the ward or room, to tuck in the sheets tightly on each side of the bed, in order, as far as possible, to restrain his movements. Very often such firm pressure as this seems to exercise a calming and controlling effect, and prevents the patient from attempting to get out of bed.

There are certain fevers in which delirium is very frequent; and in small-pox and in scarlet fever especially this is sometimes a serious and very prolonged symptom. Then again, in rheumatic fever, delirium is sometimes very severe, and in such cases it often denotes considerable danger. In some of these cases it is probable that the delirium is due to a rheumatic inflammation of the membranes of the brain, and may then be accompanied with agonising pain in the head. In brain diseases—for example, in inflammation of the membranes or *Meningitis*—the delirium is often associated with convulsions, due to direct pressure upon the inflamed surface of the nerve tissue; and for these cases, of course, special treatment is required. In cases of delirium, arising in the course of severe febrile attacks, the old-fashioned treatment of applying cold to the head is founded, not only on common sense, but on scientific principles.

The object to be attained, in fact, is to reduce the overloaded condition of the vessels of the brain, and the application of cold to the head, by contracting the vessels, will do this most effectually and most rapidly. For this purpose, the use of Leiter's tubes is the simplest and best method. The old-fashioned ice-bag, which held hard lumps of ice, weighed heavily on the head, and the rapid melting of the contents soon converted these into warm water; and then the patient had to be disturbed again to have the bag refilled with ice, or, if this was neglected, the warm application, by assisting the vessels to dilate again, did more harm than good. In many cases, the diminution of the temperature effected by drugs is efficacious, the delirium passing away as the temperature falls, although perhaps returning if the fever increased. This fact, by the way, serves to explain the reason why many patients are delirious at night, although they seem to be quite clear-headed during the day; the condition, in fact, being dependent on the rise of temperature which so commonly occurs in the evening, in the course of many acute diseases.

(To be continued.)

Medical Matters.

ESERINE.



ONE of the commonest accidents, at any rate in an English schoolboy's life, is what is called a "black eye," and bruising of the face and eye also occurs with sufficient frequency amongst older persons to make a fact, recently published in a French contemporary, of interest as well as of importance. It has been found that by the application of Eserine such an extravasation of blood is rapidly absorbed, so that the discoloration of the eye is quickly removed. It will require further experience to determine whether the remedy is applicable to all bruises, and whether its employment always secures the removal of effused blood under the conjunctivæ. But the cases already recorded are sufficiently conclusive and successful to encourage the use of this remedy in appropriate instances.

HEART DISEASE.

SOME valuable papers have recently appeared in an American contemporary concerning the effects produced upon the growth of the body by the existence of heart disease. In the great majority of cases, diseases of the valves, and, almost invariably, disease of the muscular walls of the organ, occur in adult life, when growth is almost or entirely ended. But in children in whom, after an attack of acute rheumatism for example, disease of the valves occurs—this is very frequently followed by a subsequent stunting of the growth and general development of the body. This occurrence is of course more marked in those patients who are born with malformation of the heart; and here the explanation is very simple—namely, that the disease or malformation causes an impediment to the free circulation of the blood and therefore prevents the proper nourishment of the system generally; and without free and sufficient nourishment it is obvious that growth cannot take place. As an example of the importance in this respect of even slight imperfections in the heart, a case is recorded in an American contemporary in which a man

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