

Medical Matters.

TOTAL ABSTINENCE.



IT is a well recognized fact that, just as alcoholic intemperance is a most potent cause of bodily and mental disease, so total abstinence must exercise a distinct influence in promoting longevity. Mr. John Wilson, M.P., presiding at the annual meeting of the Scottish Temperance Life Assurance Company, Limited, submitted the following remarkable figures as the experience of the Company in dealing with abstainers' lives during the past fifteen years:—

TEMPERANCE SECTION.			
	Claims Expected.	Actual Claims.	Ratio.
1883-1887	43	15	35 %
1888-1892	159	79	50 %
1893-1897	290	138	48 %
	492	232	47 %
GENERAL SECTION.			
	Claims Expected.	Actual Claims.	Ratio.
1883-1887	11	7	62 %
1888-1892	49	33	68 %
1893-1897	95	67	70 %
	155	107	69 %

In other words, over a period of twelve years, while less than half the total abstainers who were expected to die each year, continued to live, the law of averages was much more nearly approached in the deaths of nearly threequarters of those policy-holders who were merely temperate. It is worthy of note that the persons insured in the General Section are of thoroughly temperate habits, the only difference between them and those in the Temperance Section being in the single point of total abstinence. The Company has already over 10,000 members on its books, and the number is being constantly added to. It recognizes the cash value of total abstinence by insuring abstainers at reduced rates, the reductions already allowed amounting to nearly £25,000.

SALT INJECTIONS.

A VALUABLE suggestion has recently been made in a French medical journal. A patient suffered during and after labour from profuse hæmorrhage. The doctor reached her at

8.30 a.m. and then found that she was almost pulseless and that the uterus reached to the umbilicus. The aorta was compressed, stimulants were given, ergotine was injected, and boiling water was applied to the abdomen; the uterus rapidly contracting and expelling the placenta with profuse hæmorrhage; the patient suddenly collapsed and seemed dead. The skin became cold, the body and head seemed to shrink, the heart's action could not be felt or heard, and respiration could not be detected. She was placed across the bed with the head hanging over, and many measures were tried to resuscitate her. Finally, a quantity of a solution of common salt in boiled water was injected into one thigh, and about ten minutes after a similar injection was made into the other thigh. Still there was no appearance of life. A few minutes afterwards, a third injection was made into the thigh, and a faint attempt at breathing was observed. After a fourth injection into the other thigh, a little fluttering was observed in the region of the heart, and there was a slight attempt at breathing, which slowly improved. At a quarter to ten, stimulants could be given by the mouth, but not until an hour later was the patient quite resuscitated. Finally, she recovered completely. The interest of the case is extreme. It has long been known to practical physicians in this country, that, even when apparent death has taken place in similar cases, the injection of large quantities of hot salt solution into the rectum has brought about revival and recovery; the fluid being absorbed into a current of blood, the movement of which was absolutely imperceptible. In desperate cases, also, such an injection of salt solution into the abdominal cavity has been rapidly absorbed by the vessels of the peritoneum with a speedy effect on the circulation. And, undoubtedly, this indirect method of obtaining the admission of saline fluid into the veins is more effectual and less dangerous than by the injection of the fluid directly into the blood-vessels. But, so far as we know, it is a new departure to obtain the absorption of fluid, in such a desperate case, from the vessels of the limbs merely by subcutaneous injection, and the case we have quoted is, therefore of very considerable interest and importance.

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