

Lectures on the Nursing of Lung Diseases.

By BEDFORD FENWICK, M.D.,

Late Senior Assistant Physician to the City of London Hospital for Diseases of the Chest.

CHAPTER III.

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TAWNY port is wine which has been kept for several years in the cask instead of being bottled at an early period. The general explanation of the changes which then take place is that the acids contained in the wine are gradually soaked up by the wood. Whatever the explanation may be, it is certain that such Port, provided, of course, that a good vintage is secured, is much more mellow and less acid than an ordinary bottled wine. In practice, also, it is found that patients, who suffer from heartburn or indigestion, after drinking ordinary port, do not exhibit these symptoms after taking the Tawny wine. These facts have caused this wine to be largely recommended for gouty and rheumatic patients. Until a few years ago, Port was supposed to be a deadly stimulant for gouty people on the supposition that it was the exciting cause of the disease in their ancestors. It doubtless contributed to produce that result at a time when the quality of a man was judged by the quantity of Port wine he could imbibe at a sitting. And the necessary result of those prolonged libations were that he obtained little active exercise, and ruined both his blood vessels and his kidneys. But, nowadays, when a few ounces of wine is the utmost that any one drinks, and when every man is more or less athletic, Port wine has ceased to possess its former dangers, and its value is better understood. The purer the wine, the more valuable it is, either as a tonic or a stimulant, and so to a large extent Port wine is resuming in popular estimation the place it held at the beginning of this century. There is, at present, a further advantage in using Tawny Port, inasmuch as it is not a connoisseur's wine; and is therefore much cheaper than wines which were bottled many years ago.

Next to Port, probably Whisky is the stimulant which is most usually prescribed in cases of pulmonary diseases. And, once again, if the matter be left to the nurse, she must exercise great care in the ordering. At the present day, it is well known that Whisky is largely adulterated with fusel oil and many

other abominations, which probably accounts for the rapid signs of drunkenness in those who imbibe such fiery spirit. It is, therefore, necessary in obtaining Whisky for a patient to insist upon it being old and perfectly pure, and that it should be obtained from a respectable wine merchant. How important this caution is, an illustration will show. A physician was recently called in to see a gentleman who was suffering from pneumonia, on account of unusual symptoms which presented themselves. The patient suffered from consequent attacks of vomiting and furious delirium; the latter becoming increased after each dose of stimulant. In fact he was suffering from intoxication. He was only having six ounces of whisky a day, and it was found that this was being procured from a public-house in the neighbouring mews. The supply was stopped, a pure old whisky was obtained and given, the vomiting ceased at once, and the delirium passed away.

In these cases of Empyema, Cod Liver Oil is very usually ordered, because of its power of building up the tissues which are wasted by the drain of pus from the system. Many patients, unfortunately, have the greatest dislike to the taste or smell of the Oil; and it is therefore a matter often of the greatest importance to so disguise it that this repulsion may be overcome or obviated. Probably every nurse is aware of the ordinary method of administering the oil by floating it in the centre of a little milk, wine, or other liquid in a wine-glass; the patient tossing this off so that the oil shall not touch his lips and thus being saved from tasting it. But with every precaution it is impossible to make some patients swallow the oil, and then some substitute has to be employed; such, for example, as the Kepler's Malt Extract and Oil, of Messrs. Burroughs and Welcome, or Scott's Emulsion. If these cannot be obtained, it is possible for the nurse to so mix the oil with calf's foot jelly and gelatine, as to make a preparation which many patients take with pleasure and unconscious of the medicine. Very often again Devonshire Cream forms an admirable substitute for the Oil, and one which very few patients are averse to taking. And finally, in the ordinary diet, milk is the great stand by in these cases, and other things being equal, the more milk and cream which the patient can be persuaded to take, the more probable will be the speedy recovery of his strength.

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