

Medical Matters.

THE RELATION OF ALCOHOL TO MEDICINE.



At the opening of the winter session at the University of Aberdeen, Professor D. W. Finlay delivered a lecture to the practice of medicine class on the above subject, and summed up his advice as follows:—

1. Regard alcohol as a drug, a very valuable and dangerous one, and put it in the same category as morphine, strychnine, atropine, and the like.
2. Prescribe it with a due sense of responsibility and not after a routine method, having regard to each case on its own merits and considering such points as the state of the pulse especially, the age, previous health, and habits, and the severity and period of the attack.
3. Young patients of good constitution are better without it except in presence of heart failure or crisis of some kind.
4. Use the smallest doses possible and give strict injunctions as to time and mode of administration. Watch its effects carefully and omit it when the critical condition has passed.
5. Be specially sparing in chronic diseases, where in most cases it does not the slightest good but only leads to waste.

JAMBUL IN DIABETES.

A writer in *The Prescriber* recently advanced the theory that preparations of jambul seeds to be effectual in the treatment of cases of diabetes must be made from the fresh drug, and that the failures frequently attributed to it are due to neglect of this precaution. An instance supporting this was given by a contributor to a later issue.

The patient was a boy of fifteen who had been suffering from diabetes for nine months. His urine gave abundant evidence of the presence of sugar. For several months no drugs were tried, the only treatment adopted being dietetic, and little if any improvement resulted. A supply of fresh jambul seeds having been obtained direct from India (with the assistance of the writer of the article referred to), a liquid extract was prepared by cold percolation and administered in drachm doses thrice daily. This treatment has now been continued for three months, during which time the patient's condition has been carefully watched and the urine tested regularly. Since commencing to give the jambul the proportion of sugar has decreased steadily, as has also the quantity of urine secreted, until at the time

of writing the urine is practically free from sugar. The case is still under treatment, but the general improvement in the patient's condition points to the probability that he will soon be free from the disease. The writer believes that jambul is a powerful remedy, provided the fresh drug be used.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MIND ON HEALTH.

In the course of an address on the above subject delivered on Tuesday at the Institute of Hygiene, 34, Devonshire Street, W., Dr. Schofield said that the subject with which he was dealing was generally much exaggerated, but there were two reasons to which the error could be attributed. One must understand the meaning of the words "Influence" and "Mind."

Man, asserted Dr. Schofield, is composed of spirit, soul, and body, and the brain is in three parts, which roughly correspond to these: the upper, middle, and lower. Health; to be perfect, must pervade all three parts—disease affects all three in varying degrees—the cure must, therefore, reach all three. All are governed by the mind, of which, however, only a small part is in full consciousness; another part is sometimes so (the sub-conscious), and the rest is never in full consciousness (the unconscious). We must remember, too, that health (body), wholeness (soul), and holiness (spirit) are all essentially the same, though now divorced from one another.

The mental process of cure may be divided into the natural and artificial. The natural is the *vis medicatrix naturæ* (the power inherent in the body to cure), which cures half of all diseases; the artificial, e.g., by drugs which are partly mental in action, by direct auto-suggestions, which, however, are not usually available when most wanted, especially in the case of functional nerve disorders; also suggestions depending for their efficacy on the experience and personal influence of the doctor. It is interesting to note that nerve force can now be actually measured in a manner which has been described in an article which appeared in the *Contemporary Review*, by means of an instrument called the Sthenometer, which Dr. Schofield produced to his audience for inspection.

In summing up, the lecturer emphasised the fact that conscious effort is futile, direct suggestion is difficult, and auto-suggestion generally impossible. He concluded by saying that he thought none doubted the hygienic influence, generally, of a sound mind, and of perfect harmony both within and without, and that this should be a condition easily reached by the majority of his hearers.

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