

Medical Matters.

THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF EPILEPTICS.

Dr. William T. Shanahan, First Assistant Physician, the Craig Colony for Epileptics, Sonyea, New York, contributes to the *Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette* a paper on "Some Features of the Present Day Methods of Care and Treatment of Epileptics." Some of the principal points advocated by Dr. Shanahan are as follows:—

SOME ARGUMENTS FOR STATE CARE.

State care for the epileptics is desired and advisable for many reasons, some of which are as follows:—

Proper hygiene, suitable occupation, and conservative medication, as can best be provided in the institution, results in cessation of seizures in about 5 per cent. and a definite improvement in 20 to 30 per cent. of the total admissions to institutions for epileptics. In conjunction with this it must be remembered that a great majority of patients admitted to these institutions are chronic cases of long standing at the time of their admission.

The disease prevents, oftentimes, the afflicted person from obtaining work of any kind. In the home these individuals act as extra burdens upon the wage earners of the family, so that much suffering is entailed thereby, and oftentimes their presence has an unpleasant effect upon the communities in which they live.

In the institutions especially designed for these persons there is a complete change brought about in their mode of life, so that they are made, so far as is possible, to feel that they have an important place to fill in the life of the institution.

The young epileptic should be placed in the proper institution as soon as is possible, and thus be afforded every opportunity for care and treatment, as at this period most beneficial results can be looked for.

With the experience of the existing colonies there is no doubt as to the desirability of caring for the epileptics in this manner, affording them proper occupation with suitable care and medical supervision. It is the duty of the State to provide proper means of care and treatment for the epileptic as well as for its other dependents.

TREATMENT OF THE MALADY.

Medicines form, in the opinion of those with greatest experience along these lines, but a part, oftentimes minor, in the treatment of the malady.

THREE GREAT ESSENTIALS.

Proper diet, hygiene, and occupation are the three great essentials to be considered first in the treatment of epilepsies, as in many other

of the maladies to which the human race is a victim.

After these have been gone into thoroughly and readjusted when necessary, then comes the question of whether or not medicinal treatment is required.

Under diet should come first the examination of the various secretions and excretions to ascertain if evidences of an abnormal state are present. The gastric and intestinal digestive powers should be examined into most thoroughly. The urine and faeces must be investigated. These examinations will bring to light errors in metabolism, which, in all probability, are, when combined with the hypersensitive nervous system (cortical substance), in many cases the cause of the occurrence of seizures.

If these faults of secretion and excretion can be corrected, and as a result the fermentations, formation of ptomaines and toxins prevented and better elimination brought about, we will be in a position to control to a great degree the poisoning of the cortical substance, and to bring about a cessation of seizures due to auto-intoxication.

Epileptics should avoid alcohol as their worst enemy. With their hypersensitive nerve cells it often acts as the spark to the gun-powder magazine.

A simple diet, varied as much as possible within certain limits, is all important. A plentiful allowance of fresh fruits and vegetables (excluding cabbage, especially when cooked), butter, cereals, milk, eggs, fresh beef, mutton, fowls, etc., but not pork. Above all, no alcohol, veal, rich foods, or condiments in excess.

Special care must be exercised to see that all articles of food are of good quality, fresh and properly prepared before being used.

Certain cases are undoubtedly due to an autotoxemia. Continued careful work along the lines suggested by Combe, offers a hope of considerable light being eventually cast upon the cause of the convulsions occurring in certain epileptics who show a state of autointoxication.

TREATMENT OF RINGWORM BY THE X-RAYS.

In connection with the criticism which has been aroused at the proposal of the London County Council to treat ringworm by means of the X rays, Dr. E. S. Worrall, Chief of the Electro-Therapeutic Department of University College Hospital has stated to a contemporary that ringworm which is probably a worse scourge in Paris than in London is now rapidly disappearing owing to the institution of the Lailor Schools where children who suffered from the disease were treated by the X rays.

previous page

next page