

MEDICAL MATTERS.

THE SMILE CURE.

The most extraordinary cure we have heard of for a long time is called the smile cure. An eminent doctor of Minneapolis, says the *Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette*, who has made a speciality of nervous diseases, has experimented with melancholy patients, and declares himself thoroughly satisfied with the good results of his treatment. His prescription is: "If you keep the corners of your mouth turned up you can't feel 'blue.'" The directions for taking are, "Smile, keep on smiling, don't stop smiling." It sounds ridiculous, but just you feel; then draw the corners of your mouth regardless of your mood, and see how it makes you feel; then draw the corner of your mouth down and note the effect, and you will declare, "there's something in it." There may be, if the heart feels merry in harmony with the smile, for a mind free from care, as Juvenal tells us, goes with a sound body. But we doubt the cure if the smile be merely mechanical, for have we not all heard of those who smile and smile while the heart is breaking?

THE WORK OF THE RADIUM INSTITUTE.

The report of the work carried out at the Radium Institute, Riding House Street, Langham Place, London, W., from August 14th, 1911, to December 31st, 1912, by Mr. A. E. Pinch, F.R.C.S., Medical Superintendent, which is published, with the authority of the Committee, in the *British Medical Journal*, is of great interest. The writer mentions at the outset that, for its correct application, it is necessary to state that the cases treated were in nowise selected. Ever since the opening of the Institute applications have been received for the treatment of patients, many of whom have exhausted all the known resources of medicine and surgery, their condition being almost hopeless.

The only cases refused have been those in which the patients were practically moribund, or where the disease was of a kind for which radium therapy was manifestly unsuitable.

It has been the purpose of the Committee to give equal prominence to the cases in which radium has appeared to be useful, as well as to those in which it has been useless or possibly harmful. Also to point out the conditions under which radium is therapeutically of no service.

We read that the repute of radium therapy has suffered severely from that irrational enthusiasm and that unthinking expectation which often attends the *début* of a new remedy. These distorting influences have been especially marked in the present instance, for radium has astounding physical qualities, and it seems to have been assumed that its therapeutic powers must be equally penetrative and marvellous. It is important to note that no examples of malignant disease—rodent ulcer alone excepted—have been treated, other than those in which operation has been declared to be unjustified, or in which operation has been absolutely declined by the patient.

CARCINOMA OF THE UTERUS.

Amongst the cases treated the report states that in cases of inoperable malignant disease of the uterus radium will often bring about results which cannot be attained by any other known method of treatment.

The hæmorrhage is arrested, the discharge is diminished in amount and rendered inoffensive in character, the ulceration is healed, and the pain is greatly relieved.

The rate of growth is checked, sometimes completely arrested, and the surrounding infiltration and induration are so much lessened that in a few instances cases previously declared to be inoperable become operable.

The action of radium is, however, only local, and though it may, and often does, check the rate of growth, yet in most cases dissemination will sooner or later occur, and the disease spread to parts beyond the effective range of radium.

CARCINOMA OF THE BREAST.

The results of radium therapy in the treatment of cancer of the breast are on the whole encouraging.

Radium should never be used as a substitute for operative interference, but when the case is inoperable it will do much to relieve pain, promote the healing of ulcerated surfaces, and check the growth of the secondary deposits. In not a few cases it will bring about the almost complete absorption of superficial carcinomatous nodules and infected glands.

RODENT ULCER.

This is of all forms of malignant disease the one which is most amenable to the action of radium. Untreated rodent ulcers not exceeding 2 cm. in diameter, and not affecting mucous membrane, cartilage, or bone, almost invariably yield to one exposure of one to three hours'

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