

AUTOTOXIN AFTER INGESTION OF FOODSTUFFS.

With reference to the mysterious deaths which occurred recently at the Loch Maree Hotel from ptomaine poisoning, I should like to state that I have known several persons who cannot eat chicken and ham or turkey and ham paste without almost immediate gastric trouble and blindness ensuing. The first case of this sort which came under my care was that of a young girl at a boarding-house in Brighton, where I was staying during the month of August about ten years ago. This girl arrived one Saturday evening, and as dinner was in progress she came straight into the dining-room and took the vacant seat beside me. She was not at all tired, having only travelled a distance of twenty miles; I thought how well and strong she looked. We made friends, and chatted together during the meal, which consisted of roast beef, green vegetables, and stewed fruit. The girl had an ordinary appetite, neither too big nor too small, and she seemed to enjoy her dinner. We both retired early. The following morning (Sunday) this girl and I, both being late for breakfast, were the sole occupants of the dining-room. I took tea, toast, and a boiled egg; she, tea, bread and butter, chicken and ham paste. She told me she had slept well, and was going to spend the morning in writing letters for the Indian mail, and we both felt glad of the fact that all the other guests were at church or promenading and we could have the sitting-room all to ourselves. The meal over, we adjourned to the lounge, and soon afterwards my companion started writing. She wrote rapidly, but stopped every now and then and looked at me in a puzzled way. I laughed, and said, "Like the schoolboys, are you thinking 'what to put'?" She did not reply at once, and then said: "Whatever is happening to me? My left arm looks so big, like two arms, and it is quite numb and so heavy, and my lips and tongue and throat feel numb, as if pins and needles were in them." She was very distressed and frightened. I tried to reassure her, laid her on a couch, covered with a rug, and procured a hot-water bottle for her feet, which were very cold. The pulse was small and rapid, which may have been caused by fear and mental depression.

I sat on a low seat beside her, and placed her hand and arm in a large bowl of very hot water, giving massage from finger tips to top of shoulder, keeping the temperature of the

water the same all the time. This helped in a great measure to remove the numbness and "dead weight" from the arm, but the double vision and "half-blind feeling" remained, and the girl continued to feel very ill, so with help I carried her up to bed and sent for a doctor. By the time he arrived the girl was able to speak more clearly, and, questioned as to whether she had ever had a similar illness, remembered that once, when at school in Paris, she had eaten *pâté de foie gras* at *déjeuner*, and about twenty minutes after the meal had "turned quite blind, had seen double, and had had the same numb sensations. The Supérieure had kept her in bed a few days, given her *fleur de guimauve*, and very light diet," and never during her two years in Paris had there been any recurrence of the malady, as she had "never again attempted *pâté de foie gras*." On the present occasion a week's rest in bed in a darkened room was ordered, brandy ʒii in soda water in the twenty-four hours, warm milk and soda in small quantities every two hours, and cascara extract ʒi each night, and if the blindness continued a dose of Eno's Fruit Salt in warm water at 7 a.m. each morning. This treatment, with very gentle massage of head and spine, had the desired effect; the patient's nerves were soothed, and the poison eliminated from the system. At the end of a fortnight I brought my patient, though still far from strong, back to London, and since that time have never lost sight of her. On three occasions since that unpleasant experience at Brighton she has tried to overcome what she chooses to term her "idiosyncrasy for potted pastes," but each time the result has been the same, double vision or total blindness and numbness quickly following where even only one thin sandwich of chicken and ham or any other potted paste has been eaten.

She has now grown wise, and abstains from all potted pastes, realising that "One man's meat is another man's poison."

SISTER MARIE.

GIFTS ACCEPTABLE.

The Matron at 7, Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, would be very glad of baby clothing for many cases in the town where, from unemployment and other causes, the parents are unable to provide same. The midwives attended 324 cases in the year ended September 30th, 1921, and this number will probably be exceeded in the year ending September 30th next.

Gifts of old linen and underclothing are also most acceptable for distribution by the district nurses amongst the very poor of the town.

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