

generally applicable and absolutely right in almost every case. However, we meet with some pathological states which, generally speaking, very rarely show an increase of the excretion of phosphates; with other affections which always show an increased quantity of phosphates in the urine and even a most anomalous quantity; and with others which are generally distinguished by a slighter, but continued loss of phosphates. To these states and affections I shall now draw attention, and I scarcely know how to give a better explanation of them, than by referring to the numbers above alluded to.

(To be continued.)

ON THE USE OF THE VAPOUR-BATH FOR INVALIDS FROM INTER-TROPICAL CLIMATES.

By I. PIDDUCK, M.D., London.

It is a medical truth clearly established, that when once the body has been long accustomed to a stimulus of any kind, a repetition of the stimulus is necessary, if not to health, to that which is nearakin to health—comfortable sensations. The sudden withdrawal of an accustomed stimulus is invariably followed by depression, mental and corporeal, constituting that assemblage of symptoms, which is designated by the term *HYPOCHONDRIASIS*. That mankind incur the penalty of hypochondriasis by habitual stimulation, forms one of the most cogent arguments against the use of stimulants, even in moderation, of every kind, including those which act directly on the body and those which produce the same effect indirectly through the mind. This observation applies not only to the use of alcohol in its various forms of ardent spirits, wine, ale, &c., and to the whole class of narcotic stimulants, such as opium and tobacco, but also to indulgence in all the exciting passions.

It is curious that addiction to one kind of stimulant is rarely accompanied by addiction to another kind. The spirit-drinker is seldom an habitual smoker, snuffer, or chewer of tobacco, and the opium sot is not among the consumers of ardent spirits or tobacco; and, again, those persons who indulge in exciting passions are temperate in the use of spirituous and narcotic stimulants.*

But there is a class of hypochondriacs who suffer from the giving up of an accustomed stimulus, towards whom our sympathies are much more loudly called forth, since they are involuntary sufferers—the invalids who re-visit this country, returning home after a residence more or less protracted in an intertropical climate. The stimulant to which they have been habituated is *heat*. On their return to this climate, that stimulant being withdrawn, all the bodily functions are languidly and imperfectly performed; the respiration and circulation are feeble; digestion is slow; the liver, kidneys, and skin are torpid; the nervous system is depressed; and owing to the retention of excremental materials in the blood, the ordinary symptoms of hypochondriasis are developed. Tracing these symptoms to their origin, they are manifestly occasioned by the withdrawal of an accustomed stimulus. It is obvious that the sedative effect of *cold* is best counteracted by the stimulus of heat; according to the antihomœopathic axiom, *contraria contrariis curantur*.

For the cure of the congestive diseases of East and West Indian invalids, I have for nearly thirty years prescribed the use of the vapour-bath.

By the stimulus of heat, applied to the whole surface, and also inhaled at the same time, the head being included in the vapour-bath, an impulse is given to the respiration and circulation, the digestion is improved, and the secretions increased.

In this way, the stimulus of heat, in the form of a heated atmosphere, saturated with moisture, and impregnated with the agreeable and exhilarating aroma of plants of the orders *Verticillatæ*, *Coniferæ*, and *Icosandriæ*, counteracts the sedative effects of cold.

The East and West Indian invalid thus re-visits, as it were, the climate of his accustomed stimulus, and obtains immediate relief from his morbid sensations; and this he does from time to time, till at length the body becomes re-adapted to its native climate.

Invalids of this class derive as much immediate benefit from the use of the vapour-bath as the spirit-drinker does from ardent spirits, the opium and tobacco smoker and chewer

from the use of their pernicious drugs, or the gamester from his cards and dice; with this great advantage, that the vapour-bath introduces no poisonous element into the body, nor does it occasion any *tædium vite*, as the consequence of its repetition.

The superiority of the vapour-bath to the usual deobstruents, mercury, the mineral acids, and saline purgatives, in the treatment of the congestive diseases consequent on a residence in an intertropical climate, is evident, not only from the cause by which those diseases are produced, but also from the *modus operandi* of the remedy.

I conclude this brief recommendation of a really efficacious remedy to those in the profession who, having practised in hot climates, and whose advice is sought by invalids who are suffering from a residence in those climates, with a quotation from Sydenham, slightly altered, to suit it to the case in point.

"The vapour-bath is certainly the best remedy for diseases engendered by cold after heat; and, indeed, I have often thought, that if a person were possessed of as effectual a remedy as the vapour-bath, for the cure of these and most other congestive diseases, and had the art likewise of concealing it, he might easily gain a considerable fortune."

Montagu-street, Russell-square, April, 1851.

ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF CALOMEL IN ABDOMINAL INFLAMMATION.

By EDWARD WILLIAMS, M.D.,

RESIDENT-PHYSICIAN TO THE SOUTH-EASTERN LYING-IN HOSPITAL,
DUBLIN.

I WAS lately called to a case of peritonitis, characterized by pain in the abdominal region, increased by pressure; pulse 140, and irritable, combined with pyrexia and a costive state of the bowels. The patient was a female who had been confined a few days before; she had taken some castor-oil in the morning to open her bowels. I ordered steeping with hot flannels and turpentine, and two grains of calomel and half a grain of opium every two hours. The next day I called, and was agreeably surprised, not expecting such rapid improvement. She had by this time taken twelve grains of calomel and three of opium; pulse reduced to 90, and compressible, with a total absence of irritability; abdominal tenderness removed, with hardly any remains of pyrexia; the bowels had been opened once by the castor-oil, possibly aided by the calomel, which acts sometimes as a slight purgative, although restrained by opium. Her mouth was not the slightest affected by the mercury, which seemed to act specifically, although apparently not producing any action of its own, as maintained by the celebrated Hunter, which at the same time no doubt it did, although not apparent to the eye, unless we adopt the theory of the modern physiologists, who affirm that it acts on the nervous system. Many things which are not apparently easy of explanation at the same time are true; the wonders of the microscope, to the medical world, explain these facts, which are stubborn things, upon which theory builds her reputation. It appears to me that the opium may have had some effect in reducing the pulse, the steeping in relieving local inflammation; at any rate, the pair making both valuable adjuvants to the mercurial treatment.

Cumberland-street, Merrion-square, Dublin, May, 1851.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS.—For some time past the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons have been in communication with the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in order to ascertain whether the government would sanction an application to parliament for a grant of money. We have now great pleasure in drawing attention to the fact that the civil service estimates for the year ending the 31st of March, 1852, includes among other grants the sum of £15,000, "proposed to be granted towards the erection of an additional museum, and for enlarging the theatre at the Royal College of Surgeons, for the delivery of the Hunterian lectures." We hope that no opposition will be offered to granting this sum from the national treasury, knowing the great expenses the Council of the College necessarily incur in keeping up the Hunterian collection, which was originally offered to the Royal College of Physicians, but declined by that body on account of the enormous sums required to maintain the collection formed by the immortal genius of John Hunter, which has been increased threefold since it has been in the possession of the Royal College of Surgeons.

* We think this last statement is open to doubt.—ED. L.