The average quantity of emulsion taken by each patient was about one ounce avoirdupois in one pint of milk each day for eight weeks. The emulsion was prepared, as before, by Mr. Heathon, at Mr. Balmer's laboratory, 94, St. John-street-road.

Harley-street, May, 1865.

ON A

NEW REMEDIAL AGENT IN THE TREATMENT OF INSANITY AND OTHER DISEASES.

By S. NEWINGTON, M.R.C.P. LOND. & B.A. OXON.

THE following account of a remedy which, after several experiments, I have found to be most useful in the treatment of insanity, will be found of some interest. It is a remedy which appears to afford us a powerful and valuable means of withdrawing the blood from any diseased organ to which there is an abnormal determination; and, at any rate, it is often most efficient in subduing the excitement of mania and in inducing sleep.

It is now known that during sleep the quantity of blood in the brain is less than during wakefulness, and that the active circulation of much blood through the brain is incompatible with healthy sleep. When the cerebral functions are disordered from excess of activity, mental anxiety, or other cause, there is a determination of blood to the brain, sleeplessness ensues, and the effect in its turn becomes the cause of further mischief. Maniacal patients have been frequently brought to me who have been for six or seven days without sleep, and when repeated doses of morphia and antimony have proved worse than useless. Indeed, the frequent disappointments from the administration of narcotic drugs during an experience of twenty-two years in the treatment of insanity have led me to try various experiments for the purpose of obtaining some simpler and more certain method of calming excitement and producing sleep.

While staying at Matlock Bath, I was induced to try the effects of being wrapped up in clothes steeped in mustard-and-water, and applied to the whole legs and to the lower part of the abdomen. After the removal of a wet towel which had been applied round the head and was very uncomfortable, I began to experience the most soothing effects, and gradually passed into a dreamy semi-conscious state, which lasted during the half-hour I was under treatment. On getting up, I felt very lively and joyous, the liveliness lasting the whole day; and for nearly twenty-four hours there remained a pleasant tingling sensation in the legs, which were affected in no other way than by redness. It occurred to me at once that this kind of application might be very serviceable in certain cases of insanity, and immediately on my return home I set about making experiments for the purpose of testing its value. The first experiment was upon myself.

On retiring to rest I ordered a large basin of linseed-meal and mustard (ten parts of the former to one of the latter) to be made into a paste, and spread upon a sheet of brown paper sufficiently large to cover the whole abdomen, a piece of muslin being interposed to keep the skin clean. In a short time I fell asleep, and was conscious of nothing till eight in the morning, when I was partially roused by persons about me; but I was unable to speak or move. One of my medical assistants was thereupon sent for, and he pronounced me in a state of stupor from some narcotic. Though I was unable to speak, I heard the whole of the conversation, and was in a dreamy semi-conscious state. On the administration of some stimulant I presently recovered.

Another form in which I use the mustard is this:—Two handfuls of crude mustard are tied in a cloth and placed in hot water, then squeezed in the hand until the strength of the mustard has been extracted. A thick towel, long enough to reach round the loins, is then wrung out of this infusion, wrapped round the body, and covered with a large piece of macintosh. In one case a patient suffering from acute mania, who was restless, sleepless, and refused food, was thus treated with the greatest benefit. Before the application the pulse was 108, but after two hours of this treatment it had fallen to 60 in the minute, and the patient was in a quiet semi-conscious

state. Afterwards he took his food regularly, and in a short time left perfectly recovered.

A third form in which this derivative treatment may be applied is as a mustard bath: in other words, an ordinary warm bath into which have been thrown five or six handfuls of crude mustard. In some cases the deep hip-bath only may be used; but in severe cases of mania the whole body of the patient, with the exception of the head, should be placed in the bath. A lady so treated, who had during the last year had four attacks of violent mania, each lasting for five or six weeks, has now for twenty-two weeks had no further attack, although the symptoms usually forerunning the seizure have on several occasions occurred: the mustard bath appears to have warded off the recurrence of the excitement. In this case the bath was used once every twelve hours, for half an hour at a time, during a period of ten weeks; so that the skin was kept in a constant state of redness. It may be hoped that the habit of diseased action has now been broken, and that this patient, after due probation, may be discharged as recovered.

Mr. W— was brought to me in a strait-waistcoat, and as many as six people had been, it was said, necessary to control him before his arrival at Ticehurst. Notwithstanding repeated doses of opium, he had not slept for six days and nights; and through the night after his admission he was excited, restless, and talkative. On the following night he was placed in a mustard bath for half an hour, so that he was perfectly red on being taken out. During the next eight days he had six of these baths, and at the end of a fortnight after admission returned home on trial.

A lady who, notwithstanding repeated doses of morphia, had not slept for seven days and nights, was admitted in a state of mania, extremely incoherent and excited. After being in the mustard bath for half an hour she became calm and comparatively rational, and expressed herself as feeling much more comfortable. She was then wrapped up in a blanket and put to bed, where she soon fell into a sleep that lasted for seven hours; and in the morning she awoke free from excitement. The treatment was continued for six nights, and no further excitement occurred, although, as she had been insane for two years, her mind remained unsound.

These instances, with others that I might quote, suffice to prove that in the proper use of these derivative measures we have a valuable remedial agency in the treatment of insanity. As nature, aiming to restore the nervous element of the brain wasted by the day's labour, diminishes the activity of the circulation through it, and allows the process of repair to go quietly on, so we, imitating nature, strive in this treatment of insanity to withdraw the excess of blood from the disordered brain, and thus to favour the restoration of the natural equilibrium and the return of healthy function. And as when a morbid action continues for some time a *habit* of it is apt to be formed, and the habit to become a "second nature," so, on the other hand, whenever the morbid activity is interrupted, the tendency to revert to its sound type, which exists in all organic elements, fails not to assert itself, and, if sufficient time be allowed, to restore the normal function. We perceive, then, how exceedingly important it is to produce natural sleep in the earlier stages of insanity.

In using the mustard bath, it is necessary to protect the privates with a folded dry towel; and it is of course desirable to have the bath placed near the bed, so that the patient may pass directly from it into his bed. If a little constraint is required on the first occasion of its use, it will rarely be found necessary on any subsequent occasion.

Ticehurst, June, 1865.

KING'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL.—The Old Students' Dinner is announced to take place on the 21st inst., at St. James's-hall, under the presidency of Dr. George Johnson. We understand that a large attendance is expected on the occasion. Social *réunions* of this kind should be encouraged. They offer to practitioners scattered over the country almost the only possible opportunity of meeting a number of their old friends, and tend very much to keep up the kindly feelings, and, as a result, the moral strength of the profession.

ROYAL SOUTH HANTS INFIRMARY.—A special meeting has been held to consider the extension of this institution in connexion with a liberal offer of Mrs. Crabbe to bear a large proportion of the expense. It is intended to enlarge it so that it will be capable of receiving 100 beds, which is the number required to render an hospital recognisable by the examining bodies.