ON THE NUTRITIVE PROPERTIES OF FISH OIL.

BY ROBERT DRUITT, LONDON.

OF the virtues of cod-liver oil there can be now no question ;—and it seems capable of doing two things. In the first place it fattens, and adds to the bulk of the body : and, in the second place, it gives nutrition a better turn, as it were : it makes the fluids and solids healthier as well as bulkier, and enables them to throw off a variety of cachectic derangements. These useful qualities have been partially accounted for on the supposition that they are due to a minute quantity of some biliary principle contained in the oil. This supposition seemed to me extremely improbable, especially on considering the numerous adulterations to which the oil was liable ; and accordingly I determined on making a few experiments on the subject, the results of which follow.

For this purpose I applied to my oilman for some specimens of the purest and sweetest lamp oil, and procured several varieties of whale and seal oil, decidedly fishy and rank in flavor, but not rancid or oxydized or putrescent. In fact, the flavor of the oil commonly called “southern oil,” the produce of the black whale, which I chiefly employed, is not disagreeable to any one who is free from fancies on the subject ; and if mixed with three or four parts of almond oil, is not a whit more offensive to the taste than the common *oleum jecoris aselli*.

CASE I. and II.—Two brothers, S., aged 3 and 5, flabby pasty children, each suffering from pustular eruption on the head and face. A wound made on the head of one of them a week since had degenerated into a flabby sore. No deficiency of food. Both took a teaspoonful of seal oil three times a day in lemonade. Their mother reports that they were excessively fond of their medicine ; they took it for a fortnight, when the skin of each was quite healthy, and complexion clear.

III.—J. W., a pale, unhealthy child, aged 2½ years ; subject to pustular eruptions on the face. Cured by the same dose of southern oil, thrice daily for a week. Cured far more readily than on former occasions by calomel. Likes the oil extremely.

IV.—J. L., a miserable child ; glands in neck greatly enlarged ; purulent discharge from ears ; abdomen swelled and hard. This child got better under the use of seal oil, but did not take it regularly enough to make the case of any value.

V.—J. E., aged 2, subject to skin disease from birth ; his mother has had syphilis ; his complexion peculiarly pasty and sallow. Took southern oil in the above doses for a month. Greatly improved in flesh and complexion ; but at the end of the course had an attack of eczema in the arms.

VI.—W., æt. 30 ; subject to sciatica. Took the southern oil ; is certain that it has done him much good.

VII.—J. W., æt. 36. Was largely bled for acute rheumatism a twelvemonth since. Has never recovered flesh or strength, and is racked with pains in the back and shoulders. Took cod-liver oil for a month with benefit last May ; left it off during the summer ; became thinner and weaker. Took southern oil in the dose of two drachms thrice daily for

three weeks; likes it much; feels stronger, and looks as decidedly fatter and better in condition as he did from the cod-liver oil.

VIII.—Mrs. P., suffered from puerperal mania whilst suckling, last autumn; has continued anæmic and despondent; has taken every form of mineral and vegetable tonic with temporary benefit. Took southern oil for three weeks; is unmistakeably plumper, clearer in complexion, and in better spirits.

IX.—J. M., a sallow child, æt. 4, took the southern oil for a week, for impetiginous eruptions on the face and legs. The improvement in flesh and clearness of complexion was extraordinary, and the eruption nearly disappeared.

These few cases do not prove much; but, so far as they go, are satisfactory. No one who had seen the children above mentioned before and after their course of oil, could doubt that a most beneficial change had been wrought by something. The great delight which the little wretches took in their dose is another point worth noticing. I would therefore suggest, that it is well worth while to make a fair experiment on a large scale, to determine whether it is fish oil in general that does good, or only the oil of the cod's liver. If, as I believe, almost any kind of fish oil will answer the purpose, then many of the poor will be able to use the cheaper kinds, who could not afford the nicer, but more costly cod-liver oil.—*London Medical Gazette*.

FOREIGN SUBSTANCES IN THE STOMACH.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

DEAR SIR,—That the human stomach, like charity, beareth all things, or *almost* all, is well known both to you and your readers. And yet there are some who may not know the full extent of its power of endurance *in every direction*. To such the following statement of facts, collected on the spot, from persons who were either eye-witnesses in the case, or were well and truly informed, will not be wholly devoid of interest.

Yours truly,

WM. A. ALCOTT.

Some three years since, a young woman, about twenty years of age, who worked in the cotton factory at Whitinsville, in this State, after having been for a long time pale, weak, and diseased in the stomach, was obliged to leave the factory and call for a physician. He found her without appetite, and greatly emaciated—great pain and suffering in the stomach.

On inquiry by her physician, Dr. Robbins, she stated that for several years, while laboring in the cotton mill, she had been accustomed to bite off threads, which it was necessary to remove, in the process of performing her task, and swallow them. Believing that an accumulation of this cotton in the stomach might be the cause of her suffering, Dr. R. gave her an emetic. By this and other means he succeeded in procuring from her stomach a quantity of cotton, which, when dried, weighed **FOUR OUNCES**. Rev. Mr. Clark, of Whitinsville, who saw the cotton and saw it weighed, observed, "There was cotton enough to fill my hat half full."