

Contemporary Medical Literature.

ACTION OF ALCOHOL.—From an elaborate series of experiments, the following conclusions are arrived at by Dr. Duchek : 1. Alcohol in the organism is subservient to an increased combustion, the intermediate products of which are found in the blood. 2. Intoxication is dependent upon the existence of aldehyde in the blood at the time. 3. The effect of aldehyde upon the blood is that of rapid consumption of oxygen; and, finally,—4. Hereby the combustion of other substances is interrupted, or rather diminished.—*Viertel Jahrschrift f. d. Prakt. Heilkunde.*

CHLOROFORM IN OBSTETRICS.—We were surprised to see that in 180 cases of midwifery in which chloroform was used, Dr. Barwell did not meet with a single case in which its use promoted the dilation of the os uteri and perinæum, and increased the secretions from the vagina. The experience of M. Caseaux confirms this observation, and reports a case in which very extensive laceration of the perinæum occurred while the patient was under the influence of chloroform. But most who have had any considerable experience in its use have come to a different opinion. In our own practice we have several times seen the soft parts very rapidly relax after the inhalation of chloroform where the rigidity of these parts had previously constituted the great obstacle to the immediate termination of the labour. In more than one case we have seen it completed without assistance where the chloroform was used as a preparation for forceps delivery.—*American Medical Monthly.*

SPINAL IRRITATION.—We sincerely endorse the opinion of Professor Romberg, of Berlin, in his great work on "Nervous Diseases," that this matter has been vastly over-estimated. Most nervous or hysterical patients, and especially those subject to palpitation, have a little sensitiveness on pressing over the spine of some of the dorsal vertebræ between the shoulders, which some have thus magnified with an alarming name. It is ordinarily, we think, simply a slight test of an irritable nervous system. When much affected by atmospheric changes, as Dr. Wood has observed, it may sometimes be rheumatic.—*DR. CORSON on Functional and Sympathetic Affections of the Heart.*

VALUE OF STRYCHNIA.—Of the medicinal means employed in the treatment of functional derangement of the heart, we have only space to notice a class whose direct tonic influence upon this organ and the nervous system we believe to be greater than any other. We refer to preparations of nuxvomica and its alkaloid, strychnia. Especially in dyspeptic complications, and in excessive "debility of the heart," they are invaluable. For safety and convenience, we prefer either the strong tincture of the vomica nut, or an equal quantity of the more uniform solution of the ordinary strychnia of the shops, the strength of a grain to the ounce, rendered soluble by the addition of one part of acetic acid to three of water; either preparation to be given in doses of five drops three times a day in water, increasing cautiously, if necessary, to fifteen drops—resting if the tingling and twitching of strychnism occur, and commencing in smaller doses when they subside.—*DR. CORSON, Op. Cit.*

FUNCTIONAL DERANGEMENT OF THE HEART.—Palpitation from derangement of the stomach is by far its most common cause. The paroxysm may be protracted for many days, and the heart's action so vehement and irregular, attended also by various forms of bellows murmur, as to render it impossible for the physician who only saw the patient pending the paroxysm to pronounce against the existence of organic disease. I have already given two examples of this form, in both of which the symptoms disappeared after the action of an emetic. In dealing with these cases, it is difficult to draw the line between palpitations resulting from mere sympathy with the stomach and those produced by certain poisonous inješta which act on the nervous system, such as tea, tobacco, alcoholic drinks, &c. A common case met with is that from the use of tobacco. This often occurs with young men of the better class who have recently entered the army, and who have smoked to excess, in addition to other irregularities. It is rarely seen among peasants, or in men who have passed the age of twenty-five.—*DR. STOKES on Diseases of the Heart and Aorta.*

COD-LIVER OIL AND QUININE IN CHILDREN.—At Ward's Island, we have been much interested with the success which has attended the employment of cod-liver oil in the marasmus of immigrant infants, induced by the want of proper nourishment and unhealthy atmosphere during the Atlantic voyage, this condition being exhibited as well among the children

born in the vessels, as in those who were carried on board healthy at the port of embarkation. The oil is given to the youngest in quantities as large as the stomach will bear in combination with brandy and milk. Many little ones have been thus rescued from apparently impending dissolution. . . . Dr. H. Cox, who has the medical charge of this department, has confirmed the remarkable tolerance with which very young infants bear the administration of quinine, no less than sixteen grains being given in the twenty-four hours, for several days, to patients of six weeks and two months old, with the happiest results.—*American Hospital Records.*

THE SUMMARY PUNISHMENT OF QUACKS.

Halifax.

SIR.—Lord Palmerston being about to introduce a Bill into Parliament for the better regulation of the Medical Profession, the Medical Society of Halifax have considered this the most fitting opportunity to memorialize his lordship to introduce a penal clause, for the purpose of summarily putting a stop to unqualified practitioners, as they feel perfectly convinced that without such a measure all legislation would, to a certain extent, be useless.

Our Memorial has received the signatures of every qualified practitioner in the parish of Halifax, in number forty-five, and we have sent you a copy, hoping and trusting that you will use your best endeavours to send a similar one, with the signatures of all the medical men in your town and neighbourhood, to Lord Palmerston.

It is important that such petitions be sent up at once, as the greater the number sent, the more likely will his lordship be to take the subject of the memorial into his serious and favourable consideration.—We are, Sir, your most obedient servants,

F. S. GARLICK,

G. M. STANSFELD,

Hon. Secretaries to the Halifax Medical Society.

(COPY.)

To the Right Hon. LORD PALMERSTON, Secretary of State, Home Department, London.

The humble Memorial of the undersigned Practitioners of Medicine, resident in the Borough and Neighbourhood of Halifax, sheweth,—

That your memorialists have been informed that it is the intention of your lordship to bring in a Bill during the present session of Parliament for the better regulation of the Medical Profession. Whatever, therefore, may be the general provisions of that Bill, your memorialists hope to be permitted to impress upon your lordship the strong necessity there is for such a summary penal clause, as will effectually put a stop to the practice of medicine by ignorant and unqualified persons, who not only bring degradation on the profession, but injure to an alarming extent the public health.

Your Memorialists may be permitted to say that any Bill for the better regulation of the Medical Profession not containing a simple, effectual, and summary mode of procedure against unqualified persons, will not give that satisfaction which the Profession loudly demand, and which the public, for their own safety, have a right to expect.

And your memorialists will ever pray.

M. S. KENNY, M.D.

GERVASE ALEXANDER, M.D.

WM. ALEXANDER, M.D.

WM. PALEY, M.D.

THOS. HODGSON, F.R.C.S.

THOS. H. COCKROFT, Surgeon.

SOLOMON SMITH, Surgeon.

JAMEL HOLROYDE, Surgeon.

FRED. S. GARLICK, Surgeon.

FRED. HOSKEN TUCKER, Surg.

JEREH. GLEDHILL, Surgeon.

LAWRENCE BRAMLEY, Surgeon.

JOHN LISTER, Surgeon.

ROBERT AKED, Surgeon.

WM. HODGSON PEACOCK, Surg.

CHRISTR. KIRBY, Surgeon.

THOMAS ROBERTSHAW, Surg.

JOHN ROBINSON, Surgeon.

WM. ELLIOTT, Surgeon.

THOS. H. CRESSWELL, Surg.

WM. THEAKSON, Surgeon.

M. F. L. ANDREWS, M.D.

JOHN HAMERTON, Surgeon.

GEO. M. STANSFELD, Surgeon.

JOHN WM. GARLICK, M.D.,

M.R.C.S.

JOSHUA ROWBOTTOM, Surgeon.

ROBERT FARRER, Surgeon.

TRAFFORD HOLMES, M.D.

WM. STOTT MAUDE, Surgeon.

JOSH. SLATER, Surgeon.

THOMAS CROWTHER, Surgeon.

WM. BROOK, Surgeon.

F. G. HAYNE.

JAMES HILEY, Surgeon.

EDWARD AKERS, Surgeon.

THOMAS WADE, Surgeon.

RICHD. WM. FOSTER, Surgeon.

SAML. SCHOLFIELD, Surgeon.

W. G. MITCHELL, Surgeon.

CHARLES SUTCLIFFE, Surgeon.

WM. THOMAS, Surgeon.

JOHN THOMAS, Surgeon.

ROBERT HOWARD, Surgeon.

JOSH. FAWTHROP, Surgeon.

ROBT. M'LACHLAN, Surgeon.