

THE TREATMENT OF DIPHTHERIA.

To the Editor of the Scientific American.

I wish to make known to the public a method of treatment for diphtheria, which has been uniformly successful, in the practice of the writer, during a number of years, which included two epidemics; and in a large number of cases, not a case has been lost since this treatment was adopted. I feel confident that, by its general use, the mortality may be reduced to one per cent or even less. I have heretofore delayed publishing the results in order to make sure that the treatment was really what it promised to be, and I now wish to use the columns of your journal, in order that the public generally may have the knowledge in their own possession.

An attack of diphtheria is usually ushered in with a high fever and headache, and, in children, with nausea and vomiting. There is great prostration. Upon the tonsils and surrounding parts are seen white, snow-flaky patches. In malignant cases, the patches are often yellow or brownish, and a terrible odor is perceived.

The remedy found successful by the writer is permanganate of potash, in conjunction (not combination) with the tincture of belladonna. The method of administration is as follows: From 2 to 3 grains (not more) of the permanganate are dissolved in from 2 to 4 ozs. of water in a goblet. Five drops of the official tincture of belladonna, or, better, from 10 to 20 drops of the 1st decimal homeopathic tincture of the same drug, are put into another goblet with an equal quantity (2 to 4 ozs.) of water. A teaspoonful is to be taken from each goblet alternately at intervals of a half or one hour. It is, perhaps, needless to say that separate spoons should be used, and the goblets kept covered.

In twenty-four hours, frequently, a favorable change will be seen, but quite as often the disease seems to go on unchecked, save that the fever may seem a little more moderate; but I can assure my readers that, during the second day of the treatment, a most marked change will take place. The fever will entirely subside, the mind will brighten, the tongue will begin to grow clean, and the deposits upon the fauces will peel off at their edges or gradually break away. The patient will be upon the highway to recovery, and a day or two more of the treatment will bring back the normal hue of health, and an appetite to correspond. In rare cases, however, when the constitution is bad (cachectic), a longer time, five, six, seven days, may be required; but even here the treatment has not failed.

I think that under this treatment, diphtheria is not a disease to be dreaded by the profession. The belladonna may, in special cases, find a substitute, but not the permanganate of potash. The only case in which the above treatment will promise unsatisfactory results is when the disease rapidly invades the larynx and bronchial air passage (diphtheritic croup), when suffocation threatens to supervene before the remedy can act, or when the mere presence of large detached deposits in the air tubes imperils the success of the case. Such an instance recently occurred, which was successfully treated with inhalation of the vapor (not the spray) of a dilute aqueous solution of bromine.

I know that the permanganate has been used as a disinfectant, locally applied, in putrid diphtheria heretofore, in dilute form (as a gargle), and upon general principles as an antiseptic; but I am not aware that the persistent use throughout the disease has heretofore been made known to the public or profession. That it does not act as an antiseptic is shown by the fact that the other antiseptics have no analogous effect; that it does not act locally may be inferred, because its marked curative effects appear in the system before they are seen in the fauces. The theory of the writer is that diphtheria finds its nutriment in partly devitalized organic matter in the blood, which the permanganate, rapidly absorbed, attacks and destroys by oxidation (being the most powerful non-poisonous oxidizer we have): thus cutting away the pabulum of the disease, when the deposits die a natural death and disappear. The process certainly sometimes appears magical in its action. I trust that,

if others employ this treatment, they will not attempt to modify it till they have first given it a fair trial in the manner above proposed.

I have also found the permanganate of potash very successful in the treatment of certain slow forms of putrid and typhoid fevers, with loaded tongue, foul breath, etc., and in recurring boils. This lends additional force to the theory of its action above indicated. I am sure that this drug, so rich in oxygen the life-giver, so harmless in its action upon the human system, will well repay study by the profession generally, which it has heretofore only received, and that in a very inadequate degree, from the homeopathic branch.

I. W. HEYSINGER.
Philadelphia, Pa.
—Scientific American.

OUR BOYS.

What shall we do With Them or do For Them.

There is a very general complaint that it is becoming more and more difficult to find desirable occupations for boys. In all the vast industrial and commercial machinery of the country there seems to be no space for the lads who must shortly be the men of another generation. There was a time when boys were regularly apprenticed at mechanical trades or in mercantile houses. They served five or seven years in the shop, store, or counting-house, and rose by slow degrees to be partners, heads of houses, or independent masters in their own line of life. Other boys went to sea after receiving a good common-school education, and passed through the several stages of promotion as cabin-boy, before the mast, ordinary seamen, mates and captain. All these, whether on sea or land, were the sons of American citizens, and whether of rich or poor parents, they were, for the most part, on a common level. There was not so much disrelish for manual labor as there has been in later years. Perhaps there was more sturdiness of character. It must be confessed that the times have changed. How far the introduction of a foreign element into active business pursuits is responsible for this, we can not tell. It is certain, however, that something in the fore-castle and in the shop has made those places distasteful to the average American boy. It is rare nowadays to find a gentleman's son working his way to the quarter-deck from before the mast. The sneering phrase "greasy mechanic" often includes a fling at the ignorant and uncongenial foreigner than of old. With this change in the material of the mechanical trades have come the modern ideas concerning trade-unions, with all their machinery of strikes, lockouts, and strife with employers—ideas which are certainly not of American origin. One of the very first demands of the trades union is that a limit be fixed to the number of apprentices to be taken into any working force. Some trades have fixed the maximum of apprentices as low as one to each thirteen journeymen, or "full hands;" possibly others have made a still more rigorously exclusive demand. The theory of this sort of proscription appears to be that men who have acquired a trade are determined that their number shall be kept within certain limits during their lifetime. Any attempt to invade that magic circle is met with a strike, in which the workmen have the employees temporarily at their mercy. As employers are not specially anxious about posterity they readily surrender. To enter what are called the "learned professions" an expensive education is considered necessary. This is not attainable by most youths, and even when it is acquired it does not always lead anywhere. In these professions there is "always room at the top," which is small consolation to those who are hardly able to crowd in at the bottom. Vast numbers of boys therefore are driven into mercantile pursuits, a vague term, which means anything, from buying and selling shiploads of goods to being "generally useful" about a warehouse or store. Here the crowd of applicants for place is tremendous. The pay is small, and generally speaking the chances for promotion and ultimate independence are smaller. When we consider what possibilities are bound up in the boy, whose only badness, possibly, is what he has inherited,

without his own consent, his future, with only a few avenues of life open to him, is not cheerful to one who wishes well for his kind. To-day the boy stands at the dividing of the ways; the chances are that he will take that which leads to thriftlessness and uselessness, if not worse. The boy who learns no trade, masters no useful and productive calling, has lost his chance. He enters life handicapped. Men, though they may be prosperous and successful, as the world goes, sometimes turn back with a great cry for their lost youth. For a moment, before they take up their burden and go on, they plead that the youthful bloom, which no power in heaven or earth can restore, shall be theirs again. The boys of this generation are in great need that something be done to fit them for the manhood which comes to them apace. They complain that there is no room for them anywhere.—New York Times.

BICYCLISM PREVAILING.—The bicycle continues to gain fresh devotees in England, and is no longer open to sceptics to pooh-pooh the advantages of the machine as a means of locomotion. A very simple answer to such cavilliers might be given by the five hundred bicyclists who recently assembled in Bushey Park, London, for a grand meet. The bicyclists were for the most part young men, but the middle-aged were strongly represented, and there were some who might claim to be venerable. There were not a few noblemen and members of Parliament there, too, and altogether it was a very distinguished gathering. That the metropolis should be able to produce nearly five hundred riders at a casual meet is of itself strong evidence of the popularity of the bicycling art; but there are other facts which still more strikingly demonstrate it. Whereas last year England could only boast of seventeen bicycle clubs, their number has in one short twelvemonth risen to sixty-eight. Leaving London for the moment altogether out of the calculation, it is estimated that there are 2,000 members of clubs in the provinces, besides some 8,000 riders unattached to any organized society. The art is not without its votaries and patrons in high quarters. Mr. Lowe's devotion to it is notorious; the Prince Imperial is connected as an honorary member with the West Kent Bicycle Club, whilst the Earl of Lewes is President of the Tunbridge-wells and Lord Gordon Grenville of the Peterboro Clubs. More convincing than anything else, however, as to the increasing practice of bicycle riding is the fact that the firm at Coventry, who are the principal manufacturers of the machine, are turning out more than a hundred weekly. The improvements which have of late years been made on the original clumsy velocipede have naturally tended to increase its popularity. There is no webbling and clattering as there used to be with the bygone iron-tired wooden wheels, and the machine of to-day would be perfectly noiseless in its motion but for the little tinkling bell which is introduced to intimate the approach of the bicyclist.—Ex.

Testimonial to Dr. E. L. Plant.

About six weeks ago I was perfectly cured of a cancer in my tongue. The suffering through which I passed previous to its removal, cannot be described. The cure was effected without any surgical operation, and I gradually experienced great relief from the commencement of Dr. Plant's skillful treatment. The entire cure was performed in six weeks. I am sixty-one years old, and am prepared to answer any or all enquiries in relation to the matter. But the case, to myself, seems so wonderful that I think it my duty to take the present means of communicating the fact for the benefit of others.

MRS. MAY,
14th Ward, Main St.
S. L. City, May 22, 1876. d&w 3te

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