

as a medical address, though delivered as such, and very charming in its own way. One other address, by Mr. Pollock, at the opening of the session at St. George's Hospital, we may also except, as a part of it dealt with a topic which is extremely important for the student or practitioner to take to heart, and on which we take the opportunity of enlarging in this article. This topic is "Idiosyncrasies" in patients in regard to food and drugs. That is, the fact that a considerable number of people are affected in a very peculiar way by certain articles of food or certain medicines, which thousands of others may take without developing such peculiarities. These peculiarities, or idiosyncrasies, are not infrequently pooh-poohed by medical men as the result of "fad" or imagination, and therefore to be disregarded or laughed at. Mr. Pollock, however, very wisely inculcates on his hearers the necessity of treating such with respect, not with ridicule. To do otherwise shows a mind of a very narrow order, a want of capacity for accurate observation, and a lamentable defect in judgment, which are fatal to the success of a physician. In the matter of food, it is of the highest importance to note well when a patient says that he or she cannot take certain articles, and a great cruelty, to say nothing of its being a tactical blunder, to ignore these idiosyncrasies and insist on the patient taking them, that we may be convinced that the difficulty is real and not imaginary. Mr. Pollock gives two marked examples of this idiosyncrasy in food. He says:

"The following instance is remarkable, related to me by the late Dr. Roupell. A relative of his could not partake of rice without most alarming symptoms. You would say with truth one of the most innocent productions of the vegetable kingdom, one upon which thousands of the natives of India and China almost entirely subsist. Some friends of the person referred to wished to test the truth of this peculiar or supposed effect of rice, and knowing that he was fond of biscuits had some prepared with one grain of rice in each. These biscuits were placed near him after dinner, and he partook of two or three. He became uncomfortable and had to leave the table, observing at the same time that if he were not morally certain he had not partaken of rice at dinner he was being poisoned by it.

"Another amusing instance is that of a man who could not eat gooseberries without their producing an eczematous eruption on some part of the body. When dining with a fashionable party, soon after the champagne had been handed around, he

observed to a friend sitting next to him—and from whom I heard the facts—that the wine was not champagne, but gooseberry wine, and pulling up his shirt-sleeve showed him the specific eczematous rash appearing. But what applies to the rice in the one case, or to the gooseberry in the other, also applies to many drugs in the Pharmacopœia."

There are many articles of food which develop in certain people unusual effects. Some can eat eggs by the dozen with benefit, while others cannot touch an egg in any form without being made ill by it. We know of a case where this peculiarity existed, and where her friends laughed at it, and resolved to test it by putting a small portion of an egg into her food in such a way that it could not be recognized, the result being a sharp attack of illness supervening directly. Some can take an egg when cooked in a pudding, but are made ill by one boiled or poached. We have known patients who invariably suffer from constipation if they eat eggs, while others we have known are affected in the reverse way, from diarrhœa. One patient told us she never required to take any medicine if she became constipated, as all she had to do was to eat an egg for breakfast, and more than an occasional one produced griping pains and diarrhœa. Hence, we frequently hear it said that eggs are "bilious." So with milk, an almost universal food and an immense stay in illness. Most of us have met with cases where in no form could milk be borne, producing gastric pain, nausea, loss of appetite and coated tongue, while others cannot take it by itself, but can do so in the cooked form to a certain degree. Fish, even whiting or sole, will digest with difficulty in certain persons, while others find chicken most indigestible. Lemon juice will sometimes cause sickness and gastric pain, while fruit, so wholesome in itself, is insupportable to a few. Oysters, so largely consumed all over the world, are a *bête noir* to certain individuals, while other shellfish are known to be uncertain in their effects. We met, not long ago, a lady of delicate digestion, who told us that lobster agreed with her when almost nothing else would, and another said the same thing of salmon.

When an article of food disagrees with a given individual there is generally a sense of dislike to its taste, going even to loathing. Not only is it the height of folly to disregard these idiosyncrasies, but in ordering a special diet for the invalid the true physician should first ascertain that nothing he has advised is a food which the patient "cannot take." There is another

side, however, to the care required in thus individualizing cases. It would hardly be credited that doctors with whom personally milk and eggs, for example, disagree, would consider them poison for everybody. Yet, we have known such. They will tell every patient, "Don't touch milk or eggs; they are poison;" and this simply because they are poison to him individually, and while the patients have averred that they had taken milk and eggs all their lives and were very fond of both, or either! Such want of philosophical reasoning is as bad in its own way as the ridiculing of idiosyncrasies.

But if it is necessary thus to watch the peculiarities of our patients in the matter of food, it is still more essential to do so in the matter of drugs. And Mr. Pollock lays stress on this point. He says:

"Sir Russell Reynolds has sent me the following notes: 'An elderly lady and patient known to me was highly susceptible to the influence of *Opium* in any form, even to the minutest dose, its use inducing symptoms like Asiatic cholera. Many years before I had witnessed these effects she had casually mentioned this peculiarity to me. In prescribing for her when suffering from bronchial catarrh I put in ten minims of compound tincture of *Camphor*. About half an hour after I was summoned, and found that she had been vomiting and purging, and was in a state of collapse. I had entirely forgotten the peculiarity with relation to *Opium*, and in prescribing scarcely realized that in ordinary *Paregoric* I was prescribing *Opium*. In this case the dose of *Opium* must have been $\frac{1}{24}$ of a grain.' *Mercury* will salivate rapidly in some instances, whether given internally or applied in the form of ointment. The importance of this fact in practice is illustrated by a case which occurred to me when surgeon here. I had operated on a young woman for cleft palate. The parts were satisfactorily brought together with every prospect of early and complete union. In almost all operations in the mouth the tongue often becomes much coated. The house surgeon of the day considered it desirable to order a dose of *Calomel* in consequence of the state of the tongue the day following the operation. The patient became most freely salivated, with the result that all union of the wound was arrested, and for the time being the operation proved abortive. I could refer to other cases of idiosyncrasies with respect to the influence of *Opium*, *Belladonna* and other drugs, but I think I have said sufficient to convince the importance of treating all idiosyncrasies with careful con-

sideration. No doubt several of you can recall instances of idiosyncrasies in your intercourse with relations and friends, but what I wish to impress upon you is the importance of not ignoring in practice cases you may have brought before you. Treat them with respect, not with incredulity or contempt."

We are bound to say that the chief offenders—or we might almost say the only offenders—in the way of pooh-poohing drug idiosyncrasies are to be found in the old school, and Mr. Pollock may well inculcate on his audience the necessity of care and watchfulness in this respect. How often do we hear of patients under old school treatment who say that *Opium* in any form has an exciting instead of a soothing effect, and yet the doctor laughs at it and prescribes *Opium* all the same till he finds out his obstinate mistake. So with *Quinine*; we can hardly get an old-school practitioner to believe that the usual Allopathic dose of *Quinine* will, in certain—nay, in many—cases, produce severe headache, vertigo, and disorders of digestion. So with *Belladonna*, which we have seen produce excitement and other physiological effects in even the 3d centesimal dilution. So with *Nux vomica*, which, with some patients, only aggravates constipation unless given in high dilutions, as the 12th or 30th. We know of one gentleman who can never take *Nux vomica* as low as the 3d centesimal dilution, at bed-time, without being kept awake in a state of excitement. Certain people tell one that *Nux* never does them a bit of good, though seemingly well indicated, while *Pulsatilla* invariably does what every doctor thinks *Nux* is indicated for. Mr. Pollock's case of salivation by *Mercury* in the form of a single *Calomel* pill has many counterparts in our *Materia Medica* records. There is a well-known case recorded in our journals where a lady, who knew her idiosyncrasy in regard to *Mercury*, beseeched her Homœopathic attendant not to give it to her in any form. Being sceptical of the accuracy of her notions, and finding *Mercurius* indicated, he gave it to her in the 6th centesimal dilution, not telling her what the medicine was. The following day she charged him with having given her *Mercurius*, as marked salivation and other mercurial poisoning effects had begun to develop. With the knowledge of such facts, it is a highly narrow-minded proceeding to ignore such idiosyncrasies, while, after a warning beforehand, the patient cannot but lose confidence in the doctor as one to be relied on and trusted in illness.*

*In an interesting article by Dr. Harrison Blackley, in the July number

But to Homœopaths, idiosyncrasies in drug-action have a much greater interest and importance than the mere practical necessity of watching their peculiarities in prescribing. These often develop symptoms of the drug, which are very characteristic of it, and which are not developed in the ordinary run of patient or prover, and so elucidate facts of extreme value. In how many persons does *Cinchona* or *Quinine* develop symptoms resembling an attack of ague? and yet, when produced in the few, they give the key to the value of *Cinchona* in the treatment of ague, and it was this power of the drug to produce a close simile to ague that was the Newton's apple to Hahnemann in discovering his law of similars. So uncommon is this susceptibility of some persons to *Cinchona*, that though there is ample evidence on record of its power to produce the simile of ague, many writers of the old school calmly deny the fact, thereby, of course, showing their ignorance of the literature of the subject. So with *Ipecacuanha*; how many, or rather, how few, develop symptoms of bronchitis and asthma, and yet its power to cause such is the fact underlying its value, recognized by both schools, in the treatment of cases of bronchitis which most resemble the *Ipecacuanha* symptoms, and in the treatment of asthma. These idiosyncratic symptoms are of no use to the Allopath, except as curious facts, but to us they are pregnant with meaning and with therapeutical value. How philosophical and far-seeing were Hahnemann's observations on idiosyncrasies, as found in his much abused but masterful work, the *Organon*. In paragraphs 116 and 117 he says: "Some symptoms are produced more frequently; that is to say, in many individuals, others more rarely or in few persons, some only in a very few healthy organisms. To the latter class belong the so-called *idiosyncrasies*, by which are meant peculiar corporeal constitutions, which, although otherwise healthy, possess a disposition to be brought into a more or less morbid state by certain things which *seem* to produce no impression and no change in many other individuals. But this inability to make an impression in every one is only *apparent*. For as two things are required for the production of these, as well as all other morbid alterations in the health of man, to wit, the inherent power of the influencing substance and the capability of the vital force that animates the organism to be

of this *Review*, other illustrations of this drug idiosyncrasy are given, and he gives cases also of the reverse condition—one of seeming insusceptibility to certain drugs in doses which would powerfully affect most people.

affected by it, the obvious derangements of health in the so-called idiosyncrasies cannot be laid to the account of these peculiar constitutions alone, but they must be also ascribed to the things that produce them, in which must lie the power of making the same impressions on all human bodies, yet in such a manner that but a small number of healthy constitutions have a tendency to allow themselves to be brought into such an obviously morbid condition by them. That these potencies do actually make this impression on every healthy body is shown by this, that they rendered effectual Homœopathic service as remedial agents to *all* sick persons, for morbid symptoms similar to those they are capable of producing (though apparently) only in so-called idiosyncratic individuals." In these profound views, as in all others, Hahnemann was a century before the bulk of the medical profession, who are so feebly apt to deny or laugh at what they do not understand. The fact of the existence of idiosyncrasies teaches a large and important lesson, from whatever point of view it is regarded, and we are pleased to find Mr. Pollock taking up the subject, in however cursory a manner.—*Monthly Homœopathic Review*.

DEATH FROM SERUM.—(M. John Lemoine.)—The 29th of December, 1894, a young girl, aged 22 years, complaining for several days, with the throat filled with grayish false membranes and presenting all the characters of diphtheria, applied for treatment and was removed to Lariboisière on the 30th of December. Injection of Roux's serum, quantity not known. That injection was sufficient to produce great amelioration, and the patient went out cured on the 7th of January. On the 14th a polymorphous eruption appeared. On the 18th articular pains which increased for several days were accompanied by violent febrile movement (102 to 104.2) and by a cardiac bruit de souffle.

On the 29th the patient vomited everything she took. The urine contained no albumen. On February 6th, dyspnoea and hæmoptyses were present. The condition continued to grow worse, and the patient died the 30th of March with asystolic symptoms; urine very albuminous, heart irregular (?), intense dyspnea, and a little generalized œdema.—*L'Art Médicale*.

APPLES AND BAKED BEANS.—A correspondent of *Popular Science Monthly* advocates the use of apples and baked beans as a

diet for the American people, and says that we ought not to export a barrel of apples but eat them all. "I have found apples to have a fine tonic effect on the stomach; one good apple will usually give me a fine appetite in ten minutes. I usually eat two or three good-sized apples at every meal; they constitute a large part of the meal, not an embellishment of at the end of it. I have found since using apples largely, that the physical power of endurance under labor, either mental or physical, is very much increased; also a gain in flesh. This I attribute largely to the fact that apples assist the digestion and assimilation of food of other kinds. Chemist's record that apples contain a larger per centage of nitrates and phosphates (food for brain and muscles) than any other fruit."

The many cases of heart failure we hear of nowadays is not, in his opinion, so much heart failure as heart starvation. "We consume too much fat forming food, and the result is a shrinking and weakening of the muscles of the heart and other important organs. The muscles of the heart shrink away and fat is substituted in place (fatty degeneration). Whatever a person's occupation may be, a good supply of muscle-making, brain and nerve-making food should be daily eaten. Baked beans—properly baked—contain over twenty-five per cent. of nitrates for muscles, and fully four per cent. of food for brain and bones; but they must be thoroughly cooked. I would not care to eat them cooked less than twelve hours. Beans should not be eaten unless one is really hungry—the appetite sharp."

The writer hails from the neighborhood of Boston and his suggestions are hereby respectfully submitted without comment.

CROTALUS HORRIDUS.—Dr. Benjamin in *Medical and Surgical Observation* published in 1771 relates the following incident which led to the discovery of "rattlesnake wine." "A very wealthy old gentleman in the West Indies had long been afflicted with leprosy to an high degree, which was deemed incurable by his physicians. Apparently in a dying state he made his will, leaving a large legacy to a female servant who had lived with him many years. This circumstance being known to the servant, she and her paramour studied and contrived how to make away with him in such a manner as to raise the least suspicion. They put the heads of rattlesnakes into the wine he drank, thinking it would prove an infallible poison; on the con-

trary he grew better, and the criminals, imagining the poison was not strong enough, added more snake-venom, whereby the gentleman was restored to perfect health. Conscience finally put his servant upon her knees before her master, confessing her crime. Forgiveness was granted, and the old gentleman gave her a small sum of money, ordering her to depart and never see him more."

BOOK NOTICES AND GOSSIP.

Delicate, Backward, Puny and Stunted Children: Their Developmental Defects, and Physical, Mental, and Moral Peculiarities considered as Ailments Amenable to Treatment by Medicine, By J. Compton Burnett, M. D. 164 pages. Cloth, \$1.00. By mail, \$1.05. Philadelphia: Boericke & Tafel. 1896.

The Homœopathic medical profession is well supplied with books on the diseases of children, but it has no book that covers the ground occupied by this. Every physician knows what to do when confronted by diphtheria, croup, scarlet fever, measles and the other ills of children, but when confronted by cases such as are treated of in this book few can do more than say that the case is hopeless. For instance, to quote from the book an illustration: "On May 16th, 1883, a young lady, sixteen years of age, was brought home by her father, a clergymen, then residing in Kent. * * * The most salient point in the case was the fact that while the right half of her trunk was nicely developed and the right breast normal and perfect in form the left breast was only rudimentary, like a boy's, the left arm not much more than half its proper size. The roof of her mouth was very much arched, the left side of her face drawn to one side, so that her mouth was awry. Her speech very imperfect, indeed, she being unable to articulate, and her sense of hearing bad, being clearly in a similar state of arrested development." Such is a specimen of the cases treated of in this work. The medicinal treatment of this case extended over a space of less than two years. At the end of that time the girl was almost normal and ten years later the cure held good. We are well aware that books of this nature, books that depart from the routine,