

is a very common symptom of many insidious organic diseases, and it is a frequent accompaniment of anæmia.

The book ends with an account of hysterical muscular atrophy, about which much has been written of late, but in these cases also there have been no *post-mortem* examinations. Even one would have been of great value, for the maladies which cause muscular atrophy are so chronic that it must be especially difficult to exclude them.

Taking the book as a whole, we would say that it is a very careful and well got-up transcript of previously recorded cases, and may be useful for reference, but that it contains nothing original, and although in all probability many, if not most, of the cases were hysterical, yet the absence of any strict scientific proof deprives the book of much value it might have had.

NOTES ON BOOKS.

Intemperance: What it is and how to deal with it. By J. T. NEECH, L.R.C.P. Ed. (Manchester. 1890.)—In this useful tractate Mr. Neech calls attention to the physical basis of the uncontrollable longing for excessive alcoholic indulgence. Heredity is credited with a large share of the causation of intemperance. Intemperance is stated to be a disease of the mind, manifesting itself in a craving for alcoholic liquors. The author includes among the temperate those who, though they may possess the alcoholic appetite, have will power sufficiently strong completely to control this appetite at any time and under any circumstances. Intemperance is held to be that condition in which the alcoholic appetite has become so intense as to overthrow healthy control of the will power, when the use of alcohol becomes a habit from the individual satisfying the unwholesome craving without exercising or being able to exercise self-restraint. The author attributes the recent increased expenditure on alcohol to better times affording more opportunities for gratifying the mental appetite for drink. As a remedy temperance teaching in schools is advocated, so that the appetite may be prevented from development in the mind of the young. It is recommended that the plan which we have already noted as having been adopted by many of the State governments in America should be carried out in Britain. This method is the teaching of the action of alcohol as a part of the systematic educational curriculum by legislative enactment, under the direction of the Education Department.

REPORTS AND ANALYSES

AND

DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW INVENTIONS

IN MEDICINE, SURGERY, DIETETICS, AND THE ALLIED SCIENCES.

MARGARINE, OR "BUTTER SUBSTITUTE."

We have examined a specimen of margarine, or "butter substitute," prepared in France, and which we understand is exported in very large quantities. The composition of the substance is similar to that of most well-manufactured margarines, and the analysis of the fat shows that it consists almost entirely of fat other than the fat of butter. It is to be regretted that the manufacturers of what would certainly be a wholesome and useful food-product, when sold for what it is and upon its merits, should have followed the objectionable practice of mixing a considerable quantity of boracic acid with it for the purpose of "preservation." Mixtures of borax and boracic acid are added to butter, cream, and milk sometimes in very large amounts for the same purpose, but this does not make the proceeding less objectionable when applied to margarine, and the unacknowledged use of these "preservatives" is, as we have already maintained,¹ an adulteration.

In the description of the machinery, processes and substances employed in the manufacture of the article now under consideration, everything appears to be mentioned except the addition of the boracic acid—a fact which is sufficiently significant.

A SIMPLE FEMALE CATHETER.

In the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of June 28th, just received, occurs a notice of "A Simple Female Catheter" by Otto Kustner.

¹ BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, October 4th, 1890.

It is described as a simple glass tube, open at both ends. The advantages claimed for it are that it is easy to clean and sterilise, and so lessens the danger of cystitis; in addition, it is so smooth that abrasion of the mucous membrane is almost impossible. All this I thoroughly endorse, and the object of this letter is to call attention to a paper read by me before the Sydney Branch in December, 1889, on "Cystitis in the Female, with description of a new Catheter." My catheter is similar to Kustner's, but differs from it in one important respect, namely, that one inch of the distal end is bent down at right angles to the shaft. A catheter with this bend has an immense advantage over a straight tube. It renders the admission of air into the bladder impossible, and it prevents the last drops of urine from trickling back along the shaft into a recent perineal wound. All will admit that these are points of great practical importance.

This catheter is made from a piece of glass tubing the size of a No. 8 male gum elastic catheter, eight inches long. One end is melted in the spirit lamp until quite round and smooth. A point one inch from the other end is also softened in the flame, and then this portion is bent down at right angles to the shaft. I find this catheter very useful in my consulting room in emptying the bladder previous to a bimanual examination, or when it is desired to obtain a specimen of urine uncontaminated by vaginal secretion.

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CHRISTIA SURGICAL TISSUE AND FIBRINE CHRISTIA.

We have received from Messrs. Thomas Christy and Co., 25, Lime Street, E.C., a specimen of their Christia Surgical Tissue, in the manufacture of which they have recently made some improvements. It is a thin, but strong and tenacious material, which we believe is made from the fibre of manilla hemp. It is very light, waterproof and spiritproof, and, under the influence of heat or of heat and moisture combined, does not become tacky. It is aseptic, and is capable of being impregnated with any desired antiseptic. From the trials we have given this tissue we are of opinion that it possesses the advantages claimed for it over oiled silk, gutta-percha tissue, etc. We have also received from the same firm samples of Fibrine Christia, a tissue which possesses the advantages of Christia, and which is stated to be much cheaper than oiled silk.

DISINTEGRATING TABLETS.

INSOLUBLE or sparingly soluble drugs in a compressed form are open to the objection that they are not easily disintegrated in the stomach when taken whole, and therefore it is necessary for them to be crushed by the patient before swallowing. Messrs. Allen and Hanburys, Plough Court, Lombard Street, E.C., have sent us specimens of their sulphur, compound sulphur, and sulphonal tabellæ, which in the manufacture are rendered absorptive and easily disintegrated. If one of these tabellæ be dropped into a test tube filled with water at the ordinary temperature, it at once begins rapidly to disintegrate, forming a loose flocculent powder at the bottom of the tube. Compressed drugs, from their portability and the ease with which exact doses can be given, are very convenient for the administration of many medicines.

COMPRESSED TABLOIDS.

MESSRS. BURROUGHS, WELLCOME, and Co. (Snow Hill Buildings, E.C.) write: Referring to the note in your issue of October 4th, page 806, in which you call attention to the remarks of Dr. Arnold, of Zug, Germany, regarding the insolubility of compressed salol, sulphonal, and antifibrin as prepared on the Continent, we beg to say that while such drugs are insoluble in the gastric juice and almost insoluble in water, they are readily soluble in the alkaline secretion in the intestines. For this reason, in compressing "tabloids" of these drugs, our method here is to first reduce the crystals to an impalpable powder, then compress very lightly, and we are thus enabled to guarantee that the "tabloids" will disintegrate readily in contact with moisture. If one of these "tabloids" is placed upon the tongue it will fall to pieces in a minute or less. The same result will follow in the stomach if the "tabloid" is swallowed, and the powder then passes into the intestine in a condition ready for immediate absorption. We have already sent you some specimens of the "tabloids" of antifibrin, salol, and sulphonal, and will be happy to send duplicate samples to any physicians who write us for them.

AN Eye, Ear, and Throat Hospital was recently opened in Oxford Street, Southampton, by a dedication service conducted by the Rev. A. F. Forbes, Vicar of St. James's. The Committee were represented by Surgeon-General Maclean.