

REPORTS AND ANALYSES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW INVENTIONS

IN MEDICINE, SURGERY, DIETETICS AND THE
ALLIED SCIENCES.

ANTI-KAMNIA.

ANTI-KAMNIA is said to be a new coal tar derivative, possessing analgesic, antipyretic, and anodyne properties. It is stated that it can be safely exhibited in from 3 to 10-grain doses, according to the age and idiosyncrasy of the patient. Analysis of a sample submitted to us showed it to consist chiefly of antifebrin or acetanilide mixed with about 20 per cent. of an alkaline carbonate. Like many of the new synthetic remedies, it ought not to be used by persons unacquainted with its properties and the probable effects it may produce. It is put up in powder and in tablets, and can be obtained of Mr. J. M. Richards, 46, Holborn Viaduct, E.C.

VIBRONA.

THIS is an elegant and agreeable preparation, well adapted for the administration of cinchona bark as a tonic without risk of the inconvenient effects sometimes attending the use of that drug or any of the ordinary salts of quinine. By extracting the medicinal principles of cinchona bark with hydrobromic acid the alkaloids are obtained in a state of combination which is free from that disadvantage, while at the same time the agreeable aromatic flavour of the bark and its other medicinal properties are retained. The hydrobromic extract is therefore an important improvement, and its combination with port wine in the form of vibrona is well adapted for use in cases of debility and nervous prostration. Vibrona is prepared by Messrs. Fletcher, Fletcher, and Co., of the North London Chemical Works, Holloway Road, N.

LIMONA.

THIS is a farinaceous food prepared from grain meal, to which have been added the hypophosphites of lime, iron, and soda, and therefore it is a very suitable and strengthening diet for children or invalids in the form of porridge, puddings, etc. It is now put up in tins to ensure its better preservation, and a re-examination of the tinned product has shown that it continues to justify its claim to be regarded as a nutritive food of great value. It can be obtained from the Limona Food Company, Preston.

NEO-KOLA.

THIS is a preparation of kola, said to be made by a new process from fresh and undried kola nuts, and to contain no foreign ingredient. Kola preparations have hitherto been objectionable for dietetic purposes on account of their peculiar flavour, but in this preparation it is claimed that all objectionable flavour has been removed without altering the properties of the kola. Examination of a sample submitted to us showed that it is a very palatable and excellent preparation of the kola nut in the form of a pale chocolate-coloured powder, flavoured with vanilla, and possessing all the stimulating properties attributable to the large percentage of caffeine it contains, which amounts almost to as much as that in an average sample of tea. In addition, neo-kola approximates more to the character of cocoa in containing theobromine. Mixed with boiling water in the proportion of a teaspoonful to a breakfast cup it gives a beverage having an agreeable flavour and of great stimulating and sustaining properties. It is obtainable from Messrs. T. Christy and Co., 25, Lime Street, E.C.

TAKA-DIASTASE.

THE preparation of this substance is due to the researches of Mr. Jokichi Takamine, a Japanese chemist. It is obtained by the cultivation of the fungus *Eurotium oryzae* upon bran. From the cultivated fungus an extract is prepared, and the taka-diastase separated from this by subsequent manipulations. The product is a grey powder, soluble in water, pos-

sessing very considerable amylolytic power. It is capable of converting 100 times its weight of starch, a fact we have proved experimentally by adding 1 grain of taka-diastase to a mucilage of 100 grains of arrowroot, the starch reaction entirely disappearing within an hour. Compared with extract of malt, weight for weight, its diastasic power is very much greater, but it appears to us to be slower in action. The dose is stated to be from 1 to 5 grains. The sample of taka-diastase has been sent by Messrs. Parke, Davis, and Co., manufacturing chemists, 21, North Audley Street, London, W.

EXTRACTUM SANTALI SOLUBILE.

THE wood of the *Santalum album*, a small tree growing in the mountainous parts of the Indian peninsula, contains an essential oil which is used as a substitute for copaiba. The other constituents of the wood are a tannic acid, which strikes a greenish hue with a ferric salt, and a dark resin. The oil up to the present time has been the only constituent employed in medicine. Messrs. John Bell and Co., Pharmaceutical Chemists (225, Oxford Street, W.), have conceived the idea of making a solution of the whole of the constituents of the sandal wood. They have sent a sample of this solution, and given it the name of *Extractum Santali Solubile*. It is a dark-coloured liquid, which the manufacturers state contains the slightly astringent extractive of the wood saturated with unaltered essential oil. The solution is practically non-alcoholic and free from alkali. It forms a perfectly clear mixture with water, the taste is not disagreeable, and it certainly could be taken by the most fastidious patient.

LIQUOR PICIS AROMATICUS.

VEGETABLE tar contains guaiacol, and since the value of this body in the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis appears to be established there is a probability that the internal administration of tar, which has almost fallen into disuse, may again revive. The old-fashioned tar water, made by stirring tar with water, was by no means an agreeable remedy, especially as the dose was 1 to 2 pints daily. The *Syrupus Picis Liquidæ* of the United States *Pharmacopœia* is a much more concentrated preparation, the dose being 1 to 4 drachms. Messrs. Bell and Co., Pharmaceutical Chemists (225, Oxford Street, W.), prepare a concentrated tar solution, liquor picis aromaticus, of which the dose is $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 drachm. This solution is a watery one, and is stated to contain the soluble matter of 15 grains of tar in each drachm. The taste of the tar is almost covered by the aromatic flavouring. It forms a clear mixture with water, and is not alkaline. We consider liquor picis aromaticus a most agreeable form for the administration of tar.

CHINOSOL.

MR. B. KÜHN (36, St. Mary-at-Hill, Eastcheap, E.C.) has sent a sample of chinisol, a new antiseptic and deodoriser, manufactured by F. Fritzsche and Co., Hamburg. Chinisol is a yellow coloured powder, readily soluble in cold distilled water, forming a yellow solution which is not affected by albumen, but is precipitated by alkalis. The powder has an astringent carbolic-like taste and slight aromatic odour. The report which Professor Emmerich, of Munich, has given of chinisol is a very favourable one. He states that a 1 in 40,000 solution suffices to prevent the formation of pus, this result being due, it is stated, to the formation of oxychinoline when the chinisol comes into contact with alkaline secretions. Chinisol is a derivative of chinoline; the chemical group from which it is derived has already furnished several antiseptics employed in surgery, and this new derivative appears to be well deserving of trial. Chinisol is also prepared in the form of compressed tablets, which are convenient for the preparation of solutions. It is stated to be non-poisonous.

ERYTHROL NITRATE TABLETS.

ERYTHROL tetra nitrate is the recently discovered vasodilator introduced by Professor Bradbury.¹ This substance occurs in crystals, which are usually prescribed dissolved in absolute alcohol. Mr. W. Martindale, pharmaceutical chemist, 10, New Cavendish Street, W., prepares this new remedy combined with chocolate. The fat of which is to a con-

¹ Bradshaw Lecture, BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, November 16th, 1895.

siderable extent a solvent of the nitrate. The tablets resemble the well-known tabellæ nitroglycerini, and are certainly a most convenient method of administering the drug.

REPORTS

ON

THE NURSING AND ADMINISTRATION OF IRISH WORKHOUSES AND INFIRMARIES.

SPECIAL COMMISSION OF THE "BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL."

XVII.—BALLYVAUGHAN WORKHOUSE INFIRMARY, CO. CLARE.

As we crossed the stormy Bay of Galway we caught sight of the tall four-square building, standing at the foot of the Burren Mountains and dominating the small town from which the union takes its name. This workhouse, unlike those so often described in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, is not built in sections; with the exception of a low erection, containing the lodge, school rooms, probationary wards, and offices, it is all compressed in a large block of grey stone three storeys high. It was an unusual sight to come across this large prisonlike structure in this wild and remote part of the country. The plan of the house places the sick and the infirm at each end of the block, the able-bodied quarters being in the middle. The dining hall is the link between the entrance and the main portion, and divides the male from the female departments. There are, we believe, only two other houses in Ireland built on this plan. We were quite unprepared for the sight of

WRETCHEDNESS, MISERY, AND SQUALOR

that greeted our eyes as, following our guide the "nurse," we entered the part called the female infirmary. The ground floor is paved with brick, from which a wooden staircase gives access to the two floors above. An unhappy idiot was crouched in the corner of the lower stair, with a shawl thrown over the head, and some dirty garment wrapped round her. In the ward to the front there were about 8 beds, and in the ward behind about 12; the walls are smooth, and have probably been whitewashed at some remote date; at present they are of all colours—the rafters black with smoke and age, the fireplace a rusty grate with some smouldering turf, two iron-framed windows, neither large nor clean enough to admit much light. Such are the surroundings of the inmates. The ward was apparently quite full of patients, some of whom were seated on benches round the fire, and others were in bed.

THEY CLUSTERED ROUND US, stroking our hands and clothing as though we were some strange animal, and called for blessings on our head after the manner of the country, when told that we had come to see them. When we could somewhat discern our surroundings, we noticed that all the patients were very dirty; there was vermin in abundance; the clothing, both of those up and of those in bed, was most miscellaneous and bore no resemblance to the workhouse garb, it appeared to consist of any garment on which the inmate could lay her hand; on some of the beds the covering was a horse rug, or would have been so-called in a stable; those in bed might have had bedgowns on, but they were not distinguishable from the shawls or capes that they had thrown around them. The bedsteads are the "harrow" frame, the bedding was either straw, or fibre matted into lumps and balls, the bedsteads stood on a raised platform which often served as a seat, for chairs there were none worthy of the name, and the middle of the ward was at a lower level than these platforms. Among this miserable group there was a barefooted woman

WHO WAS CALLED THE NURSE;

she pathetically remarked "I do the best I can for them, but it's not much I can do." The only apparatus that we saw for washing was two pails on a board supported between two

beds, underneath it were the saucepans; but we should judge from appearances that washing is the last thing thought of for the patients, and that a change of clothing for either bed or patient does not form part of the routine of the wards. There are six wards on the female side all resembling each other; we did not see any empty beds. It was difficult to arrive at any accurate statement of the nature of the diseases for which the inmates were on the sick books; it appeared to us that the aged and infirm were among the sick; but we certainly saw some faces on which illness and suffering had left their mark. There was one old woman who was dabbing her chest with a piece of wet rag, for what she called "the heart complaint;" another woman had dislocated her leg, there were some cases of phthisis; a young girl suffering with the last mentioned complaint was in one ward, her fresh, youthful face, made more refined by her complaint, looking quite out of harmony with the horrors around her. The most serious cases appeared to be on the first floor; one woman in a corner bed attracted our attention, she was very emaciated and extremely weak, and apparently near her end, but there was no notification that she was the object of any special care or nursing.

THE UPPER WARDS

have pitched roofs and small windows. In one there was a man in very dirty clothing, seated on a bed wherein was an old woman, his mother. He came every day, bringing his food with him, some bread in a dirty handkerchief, so that he might eat his tea with his mother; his devotion was touching, but we felt that a little cleanliness would not have hindered this feeling, and it would have been better for the ward. In one corner was an old woman crouched in a corner praying at the top of her voice; she was feeble-minded. In this ward most of the patients were up. We observed dirty clothes lying about, in the beds, on the beds, under the beds, unemptied vessels of all kinds, bread anywhere, on the shelves, on the floor, in dirty handkerchiefs, and some mugs of tea. Comforts there were none, nor any appearance to indicate order or method, we should hazard a guess that these poor creatures were in want of every attention and care.

ON THE MALE SIDE

the arrangement of the wards is the same; but there were fewer patients, the wards on the top floor being unoccupied. Most of the cases we saw were those of old age and infirmity, very few were in bed. The total number, we were informed, in the infirmary was 72, and the total number in the house 101. Among those in bed we noticed a few cases of phthisis, and the others were bedridden old age. The aspect of the wards was perhaps a shade less squalid than on the female side, they were a little tidier, but they bore not the least resemblance to places for the treatment of the sick; they were bare of all comforts or appliances for sanitary purposes, and the bedding was equally dirty and uninviting. When we inquired

ABOUT THE NURSING,

we were informed that a woman from the female infirmary came over to the men by the day, and that there were the usual wardsmen; those we saw were old and feeble. The wardswomen are the mothers with their infants, and we concluded that there was no nursery, as we saw these infants all over the wards. Our guide was the nurse (untrained). She has been recently appointed, and informed us that she was to go to Dublin for a short time to learn her work. Her idea of responsibility was vague, as she mentioned in the course of conversation that "she had nothing to do with the wards, the women saw to that." Her quarters are in the male block, from whence the master fetches her if her services are required in the night,

FOR THERE IS NO NIGHT NURSE,

and there are no bells for communication with the officers quarters. We inquired what happened if a death occurred, and we were told that the corpse remained in the wards, or was laid out in the dayroom, and this statement was verified, for as we stood at the door leading to the female airing court we saw immediately opposite a door on which was painted in large letters "Dead-house." Perhaps those words were painted when the peasantry could not read, but we were shocked to think that the authorities were so deficient of all