RECENT RESEARCH.

THE EFFECT OF THE ENTRANCE OF AIR INTO THE CIRCULATION.

Dr. H. A. Hare publishes in a recent *Philadelphia Therapeutic Gazette* certain experiments on the above-mentioned subject. We are taught by all text-books that the entrance of air into a vein is one of the most serious complications which may occur during an operation. But Dr. Hare shows by experiment that there is not so much danger as supposed. Upwards of seventy dogs were experimented with. The conclusions arrived at were, that enormous amounts of air must enter a vein to cause death, and that no such quantity can possibly find its way into a vein injured by the knife of the surgeon. But there are a number of cases on record in which death has been attributed to the entrance of air into veins; and death has also been attributed to the entrance of air into the uterine sinuses. It has been theorised that air produces a frothy state of the blood, which prevents the due transfer of the fluid through the pulmonary tissue, also to gaseous distension of the heart, preventing the closure of the valves. But there is no evidence to prove that air cannot go where blood may flow, and if valves can close on a current of blood there is no reason why they should not close on air. Dr. Hare thinks, as the result of his eighty experiments, that the cases recorded as death from the entrance of air into the veins really happened from other causes. Although we may not agree with all the writer advances, enough has been advanced to demand a renewal of investigations into this interesting and important subject.

HYGIENE.

CYCLING IN ITS RELATION TO HEALTH.

The above is the title of a paper in the last *Provincial Medical Journal* by Mr. W. Armstrong Willis, of Monmouth. Mr. Willis thinks no apology necessary for introducing the subject into a medical journal, and we certainly share this opinion. For the exercise is now so general, and medical men are so often consulted as to its expediency, that it is well to have the opinion of a medical man—a cyclist himself. Dr. Willis says that about the age of thirty he was told by a medical friend "You have ceased to grow longitudinally, though not latitudinally"; and "that word latitudinally commanded his respect." After a humorous account of how he learnt the use of a machine, he asks the questions, Is tricycling safe, pleasant, useful, and easy? As for safety, accidents with moderate care are rare, and chiefly occur from turning sharp corners, going down hill too rapidly, and collisions. As for pleasantness, that depends on the roads and hills. As for utility, Mr. Willis has found his machine of great use to him in getting over his rounds, and he has often carried packages weighing over thirty pounds. At first cycling is not easy. It is a painful effort, but the first day is the worst. Facility rapidly comes with practice. The beginner should do a mile or two a day, gradually increasing the distance, and soon he will be able to get over thirty or forty miles a day "without turning a hair, without conscious effort, and without the smallest subsequent fatigue." Admitting all this, and much more advanced by Dr. Willis, we think cycling is not fitted for all sorts and conditions of human beings. Riding, on some machines at least, tends to round the shoulders and contract the chest. Healthy as such exercise on suitable machines may be for the young and strong, with unimpaired circulatory organs, it is dangerously severe exertion for persons who, advanced in life, have any heart or arterial imperfection. Especially if they mount after a meal, when serious consequences may ensue.

DIETETICS.

FISH AS FOOD.

A contemporary recently observed that sometimes attacks of diarrhœa follow the ingestion of oysters, but the comparative rarity of this leads many to brave the danger with an easy mind. Bowel irritation following eating oysters is more frequently observed in tropical and semi-tropical than in temperate climates. In Bombay, for instance, such affections following oysters as a food are so frequent that many Anglo-Indians will not use them. Recently, in Dublin, a correspondence has taken place in the local newspapers as to the probability of typhoid fever being occasioned by eating oysters, due to the presence of sewage matter in the oyster or its juices. This is quite possible, although we think not probable. In Bombay some time ago it was theorised that oysters taken from mangrove swamps were more deleterious than those obtained from places where the mangrove did not grow. This, however, was proved to be fallacious, and the idea that mangrove swamps collected or impeded the flow of sewage became untenable, and the unhealthiness of oysters was perforce attributed to commencing decomposition. It is not, however, oysters only which produce diarrhœa or other unpleasant results. An inquest was recently held in London by Dr. Thomas, where illness and death appear to have resulted from partaking of fried plaice. Shell-fish are often credited with exciting diarrhœa, indigestion, nettle-rash, and other ailments. Occasionally, especially in tropical climates, the symptoms produced by impure fish are very much the same as those of cholera. A fish which may be perfectly fresh and wholesome at one time of the day may, on peculiar conditions of the atmosphere, be the reverse in a few hours. Doubtless this depends on the formation of a ptomaine possessing poisonous properties. Such a poisonous principle has, in fact, been isolated from shell-fish by Brieger, who terms it mytilotoxine. Inferior and cheap fish are constantly being hawked about the streets, and perhaps even sold in shops. Often a fish with ptomaine inside may be sold in ignorance of any such change having taken place. Mr. J. Lawrence Hamilton tells us that occasionally stale cod fish have their gills smeared with fresh bullock's blood, so that they may appear recently captured. Fish are sometimes inflated with air or "blown," so as to make skinny fish appear plump and fat. Small haddocks and rock pouters are often skinned, and their tails inserted in their mouths, and sold at a high price for whiting. Filleted soles are often dressed weavers or plaice. Halibut and brill are passed off as turbot. Turtle soup is often manufactured from conger eel. Lobsters are freshened up by reboiling, thus concealing the odour of commencing decomposition. Light weight lobsters are made heavy by the introduction of pieces of fresh haddock. Canned oysters are often mussels with their tyssus or moorings removed: and so on throughout the whole of the fish trade, deception seems to be practised in order to dispose of this perishable article of food. We certainly had little idea of the extent of the deception practised, and cannot but hope Mr. J. Lawrence Hamilton, in his "Fish Frauds," describes only exceptional occurrences. The fish thus deteriorated are chiefly sold to the poor, whose fresh food supplies are always dear, and too frequently unwholesome and unpalatable, acting as one of the overlooked factors which drive many to chronic intemperance. We think, however, that something must be attributed to the treatment the fish receives after it is bought by the poor. Those acquainted with the domiciles of the poor will readily understand that a fish kept only a few hours in certain places would be in the most favourable position possible for the formation of ptomaines, often the