

SMALL DOSES OF ANTIMONY IN INFLAMMATIONS.

Extract from a report of the Civil Med. Department of His Highness the Nizam's Govt. for 1888 (1297 Fasli).

BY SURGEON-MAJOR E. LAWRIE,
Residency Surgeon, Hyderabad.
AFZALGUNJ HOSPITAL.

It only remains to consider briefly the use of small frequently repeated doses of antimony to arrest inflammation. In the report for 1294 Fasli (1885), attention was drawn to the fact that Dr. Kent Spender, of Bath, had pointed out in the March 1885 number of the *Practitioner*, that antimony in frequently repeated small doses $\frac{1}{16}$ th of a grain of tartar emetic, every hour or two hours, has the power of completely dissipating early local inflammations. Acting on Dr. Spender's suggestion, the treatment of surgical inflammation by antimony in small doses, frequently repeated, was commenced in the Afzalgunj Hospital in May 1885. We have gradually extended its use, and have now come to look upon it as one of the most valuable drugs we possess, and as useful in local inflammations as quinine is in malarious fever. It prevents and arrests inflammation, if this is not originated or kept up by a specific or septic cause. There is nothing

new in the employment of antimony to arrest inflammations, but all Lauder Brunton* says about it is:—

“For its diaphoretic action, antimony has been used to arrest inflammations, such as catarrh, and to check febrile conditions; for this purpose it is not infrequently given as tartar emetic, in doses of $\frac{1}{16}$ th grain frequently repeated, or as James' powder.” There must be more than the diaphoretic action in the effect which antimony in small frequently repeated doses has upon inflammation, though at present it may not be understood. But it is not yet understood how it is that the well-known tolerance of antimony sets in after the drug has been administered several times, either in large or small doses, nor is it understood how it is that antimony increases the frequency of the heart's action. There is something about antimony which requires to be worked out, and in my opinion, it will well repay anybody who has the time to do it, to thoroughly enquire into the action of this drug on the system in health and disease. In all inflammatory diseases, which are not of a specific nature, antimony is always used in the Afzalgunj Hospital. It may be given without fear of causing nausea and diarrhoea or depression, even in diseases where its use would appear to be contra-indicated. For example, during the last year we have employed it with unfailling success in mucous enteritis, which is of all diseases the most fatal to children in the

plains of India. In these cases it arrests the diarrhoea and fever when nothing else will. On the other hand, we have employed it lately in the treatment of typhoid fever, and have found that it cuts the disease short with such certainty that it almost appears doubtful whether the lesion of typhoid is specific or is not rather incidental or adventitious. In typhoid fever, no less than in mucous enteritis, the diarrhoea depends upon an inflammation of the intestine, and though at first sight it might be thought that antimony would increase the diarrhoea, it actually stops it, for the simple reason that it arrests the inflammation which causes it. I have had great difficulty in making the hakims in the Nizam's service use it, on account of the impression which prevails that antimony lowers or depresses the heart's action. * But it has no lowering effect unless it is pushed so far as to cause its own peculiar nausea and diarrhoea. On the contrary, it increases the frequency of the heart's action, while slightly lowering the blood pressure. Tolerance of the drug is very soon established, it can be administered with cardiac tonics, and there are few, if any, cases which are susceptible of benefit by it in which it cannot be employed in sufficient quantity to do good without any fear whatever of inducing depression.

THE FEVERS OF BHAMO.

BY FRANK BLAKE,

Assistant Apothecary, in Medical Charge, Station Hospital.

AN unusual outbreak of malarious fever having come under observation in this hospital during the past monsoon season, I am induced to afford some particulars which may be of interest to readers of the Gazette in general, and to those in particular whom duty may bring hitherward. It may not be superfluous to preface

* I was lately attending the sister (aged eleven) of one of the hakim's (doctors) in His Highness's service during an attack of typhoid fever. I ordered her the wine of antimony in 10 minims doses every hour, but I could not persuade the hakim to give it regularly, or even frequently, on account of the unfounded dread which he entertained of its depressing effects, and the girl got steadily worse until the 19th day. After seeing her in the morning of this day, I received an urgent message about noon to say she was dying. I at once went to her, and found her almost *in extremis*, the belly was very tympanitic, and the diarrhoea continuous and involuntary, the temperature 105°·020, the pulse over 160, and almost uncountable, and she was in a low state of delirium. I knew I could not persuade the hakim to give her antimony and felt sure she would die without it. I therefore prescribed a strong stimulating mixture containing strophanthus, æther and ammonia, to be given every hour; but I sent word privately to my dresser to add fifteen minims of antimonial wine to each dose. An English nurse was nursing the girl, and as the hakim thought the mixture contained no antimony, he and the nurse together gave it regularly every hour. The effect was magical, and after 12 doses all the symptoms gradually abated and the child recovered. She took the 15 minims of antimonial wine, grain $\frac{1}{16}$ th of the tartar emetic, every hour, until she was completely out of danger, and had, altogether, 12 doses.