

tle and refined women—a vast multitude with emaciated forms, staggering steps, haggard faces, upon which the deep lines of hopeless, helpless, severest suffering are graven, make a sad procession from which medicine takes away no single one, but all move steadily onward to the grave. If Mattei's discovery proves true, it will be one of the greatest blessings the race has ever had. But most probably this alleged discovery is only a delusion, and on the tomb will be written, miscarriage.

Only a few years ago, and sulphuretted hydrogen was to cure consumption. The new remedy was paraded in the newspapers, instrument makers were busy making the apparatus, in hospitals and in private practice the supposed curative agent was tried, and medical societies discussed it. The craze did not last a year; the method perished; another miscarriage!

A few months since and a great tide of doctors, and a greater tide of patients swept to Berlin with the vain hope that consumption was to be cured by hypodermatic injection of a subtle medicine. The whole civilized world was ready to shout with joy: But now, though hope is not dead, the light is very faint in comparison with what it was last October.

In connection with Koch's work, the following passage from Coleridge shows that this great philosopher did not believe in the principle which was involved in it. It is quoted, not expecting it to have immediate professional endorsement, but that it at least may be well considered: "The study of specific medicines is too much disregarded now. No doubt, the hunting after specifics is a mark of ignorance and weakness in medicine, yet the neglect of them is also a proof of immaturity; for in fact, all medicines will be found specific in the perfection of the science."

The subject of bacteriology has, I believe, undue importance in professional study and teaching. Professors or demonstrators of this department of knowledge are found in many of our medical colleges, and indeed it is proposed that hospital nurses should be taught the subject—made omniscient of bacilli and cocci, and fluent in describing cultures and experimental demonstrations. Is it not possible that we may be found tithing mint and annis and cummin, and neglecting the weightier matters of law? The splendid results obtained in abdominal surgery by List, Bantock and Joseph Price, all working without antiseptics, have not been surpassed—I do not believe equalled—by any three operators employing these agents. A faithful and intelligent asepsis will generally render antiseptics superfluous, and it is in case we cannot secure the former that we resort to the latter. The nail brush, soap and hot water are of more importance than corrosive sublimate and carbolic acid in prophylaxis.—*Bulletin of the American Academy of Medicine.*

SOME NOTES BEARING ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF IRON.

Although iron is highly esteemed as a medicament, and is largely used for its tonic effect upon the system, so frequently does it occur that the patient objects, owing to some idiosyncrasy or fancy, that we cannot regard it wholly as an ideal hæmatinic. No apology, therefore, is required in offering to the profession a comparatively recent preparation, which is free from some of the objections that have been urged against many of the iron preparations now in use. In order to make the reasons which I have to offer clear and distinct to the casual reader, I have deemed it wise to consider briefly some points intimately connected with the pharmacology of the drug. From this preliminary study we shall be in a measure prepared to estimate how nearly the new product comes to meeting the defects with which we have had to contend so long, and at the same time it may possibly lead to a more intelligent use of this well-known remedy.

Besides the reduced iron, we have in general use the ferric and ferrous preparations, the latter being more mild, less astringent, and free from the objections to the ferric salts—that of coagulating albumin. Doses of the ferric salts used intravenously, in experimental investigations, cause almost immediate paralysis of the central nervous system, fall of blood-pressure, and death. Although the perchloride when thus used, causes instant death by coagulation of the blood, it does not act in this direct manner when introduced subcutaneously; the nerves are unaffected, but at the points of elimination inflammatory action is set up, *e. g.*, the kidneys, liver, and intestinal mucous membrane show more or less effect.

Absorption takes place as a peptonate or albuminate, but it is taken up so slowly that no appreciable result follows, unless, as just stated, it may be used intravenously or subcutaneously. Absorption takes place more rapidly in catarrhal conditions of the intestinal tract, a fact to be borne in mind when exhibiting large doses, which cause gastro-intestinal catarrh. Small doses do not have this effect, nor does the metal appear in the urine from their administration, such as may be observed after the ingestion of large doses. It will be inferred from the foregoing that by the exhibition of small doses of a soluble preparation of iron it will be assimilated without causing derangement of the alimentary tract and in this way the secondary effect, *i. e.*, the deposit of the metal in the system, may be avoided.

The fact should be kept constantly in view, that metals have a poisonous action upon nerves; nerve-centres, muscles, and upon all glandular structures; and as iron is a reputed hæmatinic, much harm may result from its injudicious em-