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Original Communications.

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ON THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF BICHLORIDE OF MERCURY IN CERTAIN DISEASES OF THE FEMALE PELVIC ORGANS.

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Bichloride of mercury has been used for several centuries as an alterative and absorb-facient, more especially to promote the absorption of syphilitic exudations. The mode of administration was generally by the stomach, until a few years ago, when the hypodermic method was introduced. The results from this latter method prove that the areolar tissue under the skin readily admits the drug into the general system, and were it not for the inconvenience of making so many punctures, it would present many advantages over administration by the stomach. The rectum has still later come into prominence as an absorbing surface, and as such there is no doubt that it is even superior to the stomach. The vagina has also been known to be capable of absorbing certain substances, but its exact capabilities in this direction do not seem to have been accu-

rately observed. In a dozen standard works on physiology and therapeutics, the fact that certain substances may be absorbed by the mucous membrane of the vagina is merely mentioned in only one or two of them. That medicaments may be introduced not only into the absorbents of the pelvis, but also through them into the general circulation, has been made evident to me in a great many cases in which I have employed atropine, morphine, iodine, and iodoform, with the results that patients either showed the constitutional effects of these drugs or could taste them in the mouth. In fact, I have found it quite common for patients, who were not aware that I had painted the vagina with Churchill's solution of iodine, to tell me at their next visit that they perceived a metallic taste in their mouths shortly afterwards. The same has occasionally been true of iodoform; while in every case of hopeless cancer of the uterus in which I have made the path towards the grave as pleasant as possible by the local application of morphine and atropine, they have produced all the general manifestations of each of these drugs.

There is one point, however, which may be raised in objection, and of which I do not feel certain as to the answer. Granted that the abraded mucous membrane of the