

results in examining the condition of the stomach in such early cases, and Dr. Croner gives the results of his own observations. He was unable in his series of cases to find any constant alteration in the secretory or motor function of the stomach. The acidity and peptic power of the gastric juice were practically normal; there was no increase of mucus to suggest gastritis, nor was there discoverable delay in the propulsion of the gastric contents. He does not accept the theories previously advanced, that the dyspepsia of phthisis is due to the fever accompanying the disease, or to the toxins of swallowed tubercle bacilli. He is apparently content to call the condition "functional."

**The Significance of Leucocytosis during Digestion.**—Marchetti (*La Settimana Medica*, No. 46, November 12, p. 541).—The appearance of an increased number of leucocytes in the blood during digestion has been studied by many observers, and attempts have been made to make use of this phenomenon as a means of diagnosis in diseases of the stomach. It has been contended, for instance, that in cancer of the stomach this leucocytosis never occurs, and that thus a strong confirmation of our suspicions may be obtained in doubtful cases of this disease. Recent researches, however, do not support this view, and the observations of Dr. Marchetti seem fairly conclusive on this point. He examined, altogether 40 patients, suffering from different diseases of the stomach, and found that the existence of leucocytosis after a meal of milk and eggs depended entirely on the digestive activity of the stomach and the consequent absorption of peptones into the circulation. He is thus in agreement with Pohl and Hofman, who had previously arrived at the same conclusion. In cases of cancer the leucocytosis may or may not be present, according to the degree of impairment of peptic capacity. All that can be said is that the presence of this phenomenon is of more weight in excluding the existence of cancer than its absence is in proving the presence of malignant disease.

**Death after Mercurial Inunction.**—(*Lancet*, Nov. 26. p. 1422).—The medical officer in charge of a workhouse in Belgium has recently been compelled to make his appearance in the law courts. He instituted a routine treatment on the admission of all infirm inmates to free them from vermin. This consisted in the inunction of a compound of two parts of strong mercurial ointment with three parts of vaseline, followed an hour later by a bath. The average quantity of ointment used was a trifle more than a drachm. Out of 630 thus treated 30 got mercurial stomatitis, 17 of these were obliged to remain in their wards, 3 had to be taken into the infirmary, and 1, an old man, aged 67, died a month afterwards. A necropsy was made, and the opinion given, that the mercurial inunction was responsible for the death. The medical officer was charged with manslaughter. Several medical men gave evidence that the treatment was proper. The court found that "it was not proved that the death was due to mercurial poisoning, as it did not take place for a month after the inunction, and there had been periods of improvement, and that though the ointment might have caused the stomatitis,