

Selected Articles.

**THE ELIMINATIVE TREATMENT OF TYPHOID FEVER—A
REPLY TO A RECENT CRITICISM OF THIS METHOD.**

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IN a recent paper on "Some of the Intestinal Features of Typhoid Fever,"¹ Dr. Osler refers to the eliminative plan of treatment as follows: "We have possibly been too fearful of the dangers of the use of purgatives in typhoid fever. The experience of a great many men who have adopted the eliminative method of Thistle, or who have given salines or calomel freely, shows that the mortality is not materially increased over that from the ordinary symptomatic plan. My contention, however, is that they are not indicated, as it is not likely that the typhoid bacilli multiply and develop their poison to any extent in the intestinal contents themselves."

The first sentence in the above quotation would seem to indicate a remarkable change in the mind of the distinguished author regarding the use of purgatives in typhoid fever. Hitherto their use has been denounced by him as "wrong in theory and dangerous in practice." Now, accepting the experience of a large number that the practice of giving purgatives in this disease is not dangerous, and thus having got rid of "the lion in the way," he still maintains that their use is wrong in theory. The eliminative and antiseptic method of treatment has on other occasions received some attention at the hands of Dr. Osler, but always in the way of denunciation and adverse criticism.

To this course one could not possibly have the slightest objection but for the fact that the criticism has been directed, not against the theory advanced, but against what the objector supposed to be the theory. From the consistent way in which the theory of eliminative treatment has been misstated and misunderstood by him,² the only inference open is that my papers on the subject in which the theory involved in this plan of treatment was set forth had unfortunately escaped his notice.

The quotation from his recent paper, given above, illustrates admirably what I have just stated. His contention that purgatives are not needed, because he considers it unlikely that the typhoid bacilli multiply and develop their poison to any extent in