

moisture is present, frequently acquire poisonous qualities by dissolving a portion of the metal.

While the stomach and the lungs are the ordinary channels of entrance of the poison into the system, there cannot be a doubt that most mucous membranes and the denuded cutis, and even the sound skin, when compounds of lead are constantly or repeatedly applied to it, are capable of absorbing sufficient to give rise to the characteristic symptoms of lead-poisoning. Lotions of lead subacetate or acetate applied to the excoriated skin have frequently given rise to this effect, as have also lead ointments employed as dressings for open sores, and even adhesive plasters when used to draw together the edges of large ulcers.<sup>1</sup> Some years ago several cases of lead poisoning were traced to the use of snuff containing lead oxide or by having become impregnated by being packed in leaden cases.<sup>2</sup> It is well known that type-setters are liable to that peculiar form of lead-poisoning vulgarly called "*dropped hands*;" and that cases of lead poisoning have occurred in consequence of employing cosmetics containing lead. According to the *Gazette des Hopitaux*, May, 1874, Dr. Manouvriez had made enquiries into the experience of thirty workmen who were brought more or less by the nature of their occupations into contact with lead, and had arrived at the conclusion that the local symptoms of paralysis, change of sensibility, etc., result from the direct absorption of the poison through the skin. "In those who were right-handed, it was always the right upper extremity that was affected; while in the left-handed the symptoms were, for the most, confined to the left upper extremity. A worker in white-lead, whose feet were most frequently brought into play (in the process of stamping), was first affected in these parts. Two right-handed workmen happened to be seized with paralysis in the left arms and hands; but in their case it transpired that it was the left upper extremity which had come in contact with the lead." A writer, J. F. B., in the *British Medical Journal*, October, 1874, mentioned the following cases:—

"An elderly lady, who had been advised to use a hair-wash to cool her head, came under my notice, complaining constantly of griping pain in the bowels, for which no cause could be assigned. I was induced to look at her gums, when the 'blue mark' was visible. A tablespoonful of the wash was directed to be used once a week. The composition was sold for a charitable purpose." \* \*

"A blacksmith had suffered for six months from general muscular

1. Stille's Therapeut. and Mat. Med. 2. American Jour. of Med. Sci., Oct. 1857.