

The attacks of *petit mal* and epileptic vertigo, according to Dr. Saundby, are greatly relieved by the use of caffeine and theine. It is in such cases that the bromides are useless. Nitro-glycerine was also used in two cases, with complete success in stopping the giddiness. Dr. Radcliffe also speaks favourably of coffee and chocolate in the dietary of epileptics, but does not approve of tea.

APOMORPHIA, A SAFE, CERTAIN, AND QUICK EMETIC.

Mr. Brown, L.R.C.P. of Bacup, writes :

It has occurred to me, in several cases, to have patients who have been obnoxious to ordinary emetics. The emetic has caused nausea and depression, but no emesis. A few weeks ago, two cases of this kind occurred in my practice. One was a man who had been drinking and eating indigestible food. Domestic emetics had been given, which had produced nausea and ineffectual attempts at vomiting. It occurred to me that apomorphia, used hypodermically, might succeed. I prepared a solution containing a grain of chloride of apomorphia, twenty minims of rectified spirit, and water to two drachms, of which I administered ten minims hypodermically which equals one-twelfth of a grain. In seven minutes it produced free and copious vomiting. There was no nausea, nor depression, nor intolerance of food. The other case was a man who was a total abstainer. Patient had loaded his stomach with a mass of indigestible food, which had caused acute pain in his stomach. He had tried domestic remedies without success. Pain was so severe; that I was called up at night. The other case having been so successful, I at once administered ten minims of the solution. In two minutes, without any previous nausea or warning, the contents of the stomach were violently ejected on the floor, the patient not having time to get a vessel to vomit into. This was repeated two or three times at short intervals, and the patient had speedy relief. In this case there was no nausea or bad after-effect.

From inquiries which I have made, I am convinced that the value of apomorphia, as a safe, certain, and quick emetic, is not appreciated, because not known. In cases of alcoholic and narcotic poisoning, it is a most valuable remedy, and, judging from my experience in one case, the emesis is delayed a few minutes. In cases of acute gastralgia, and convulsions in children due to overloaded stomach, apomorphia will prove a speedy cure. I have given one-sixth of a grain of the drug to children by the mouth without producing any effect whatever.—*British Medical Journal*.

SODIUM NITRITE FOR EPILEPSY.

At a meeting of the Royal Med. and Surg. Society, Dr. Ralfe claimed for Dr. Law, of Has-

tings (*Brit. Med. Jour.*), the credit for first recommending nitrite of sodium in the treatment of epilepsy, and for assigning his theoretical reasons therefor in the *Practitioner* (June, 1882). Sodium nitrite resembles in its action amyl and nitro-glycerin—its advantage being that its effects, while slower, are more permanent. The dose should just escape producing physiological effect. The dose should be pure. Of seventeen cases thus treated three were unimproved, one was doubtful, four received slight benefit, and nine were most decidedly improved. The author drew the following conclusions: 1. Those cases in which bromides are of marked service are not suitable for the nitrite. 2. Those cases in which the bromides do not agree well will be probably found to improve under the use of the nitrite. 3. When the bromides are losing their effect, or when there is bromism, sodium nitrite is used for a change. 4. There are a class of cases of minor convulsive attacks often occurring at night in which the nitrite is decidedly useful.—*Weekly Med. Rev.*

DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES ON PHYSICAL DIAGNOSIS AND SPECIALISM.

I have often felt, when seeing hospital patients worried by hammering and long listening to their breathing, in order that the physician might map out nicely the diseased territory, the boundaries of which he could not alter, as if it was too much like the indulgence of an idle and worse than idle curiosity. A confessor may ask too many questions; it may be feared that he has sometimes suggested to innocent young creatures what they would never have thought of otherwise. I even doubt whether it is always worth while to auscult and percuss a suspected patient. Nature is not unkind in concealing the fact of organic disease for a certain time. What is the great secret of the success of every form of quackery? *Hope kept alive*. What is the too fatal gift of science? *A prognosis of despair*. "Do not probe the wound too curiously," says Samuel Sharp, the famous surgeon of the last century. I believe a wise man sometimes carefully worries out the precise organic condition of a patient's chest when a *very* wise man would let it alone, and treat the constitutional symptoms. The well-being of a patient may be endangered by the pedantic fooleries of a specialist.

ECZEMA OF THE SCALP IN INFANTS.

Dr. Lassar (*Gaz. Méd.*) employs the following formula: Salicylic acid one, tincture of benzoin two, and vaseline fifty parts. A certain quantity of this is smeared over the scalp two or three times a day, after having washed the infant's head with soap and water. To soften the crusts and facilitate the cleansing of the scalp, Dr. Lassar recommends the employment of oil containing two per cent. of salicylic acid.