

4. Calomel taken into the stomach during the digestion of protein aliments is entirely or in part decomposed in that viscus.

5. In this decomposition metallic mercury is first set free, and a soluble compound of it is then formed.

6. Calomel taken into the stomach during the digestion of bread, starch, soup, gelatine, &c., undergoes the same changes and in the same manner when taken during fasting.

7. This reaction, which takes place in the course of the intestinal canal when calomel is ingested, is attended with a greater or less increase of the alkaline chlorides in the system.

8. The alkaline chlorides when in small quantity diminish, and when in large quantity neutralise the action of the carbonates of the calomel.

9. In cases where sulphurous waters or sulphur are taken into the stomach, or in indigestion or acute or subacute gastric catarrh, the sulphydric gas which is formed converts the calomel into sulphide. If, however, the quantity of the gas be so small that it is all used in the formation of sulphide of mercury, the alkaline chlorides and the lactic and hydrochloric acids of the gastric juice are still capable of acting on the sulphide, so that the action of the calomel, or rather of its soluble compound, is only delayed, not neutralised.

10. During and after the administration of calomel, acid drinks and fruits should be taken very sparingly or none at all.

11. Magnesia or its carbonate favour rather than impede the local effects of calomel.

12. As little common salt as possible should be mixed in the soup and broth given to those who are under the action of calomel.

13. The purgative effect of calomel is increased by taking milk during or shortly after its administration.

14. Calomel may be injurious when given during the administration of acetate, nitrate, carbonate, succinate, benzoate, &c., of ammonia or to persons suffering from ammoniaemia, uraemia, cholera, typhus, &c.

15. Injurious results may also follow the administration of calomel simultaneously with chloride of ammonium, the alkaline and metallic iodides and bromides, and the alkaline sulphites, bromates, and iodates.

16. Although the hyposulphites produce a soluble compound of mercury by their action on calomel, they neutralise its action if given with it during digestion: for the hyposulphites are decomposed by the acids of the gastric juice, and sulphur is precipitated, which, coming into contact with the nascent hydrogen from the food, produces sulphydric acid; and this forms, with the calomel, an insoluble and inert sulphide of mercury. On the other hand, the hyposulphites rather increase the action of calomel, and may even render it deleterious, when given with it on an empty stomach.

17. Chocolate, sugar, gum, aloes, and soap, mixed with calomel in various officinal preparations, do not give rise to the formation of a soluble mercurial compound, and do not therefore, increase the effect of calomel.

18. Opium and its preparations diminish the

effect of calomel, not by any chemical action, but by blunting the sensibility of the organic fibre to the action of calomel.

19. Severe symptoms may follow the administration of calomel by the mouth to persons who for a day or two only discontinued the use of the alkaline iodides, bromides, and sulphites.

20. When calomel is given on a full stomach to persons who have been taking hyposulphites until a day or two previously, it may remain without effect in consequence of the presence of the sulphydric gas produced from the hyposulphites which have not yet been eliminated.

21. Calomel applied to healthy or diseased external parts, or injected subcutaneously, is rendered soluble by the alkaline chlorides present in the system.

22. Severe local and constitutional symptoms may follow the local application or the subcutaneous injection of calomel in the case of persons who are taking the alkaline iodides, bromides, or sulphites.

23. Grave results may also follow the application of calomel to healthy external parts or its subcutaneous injection, in persons who are taking internally alkaline hyposulphites, or sulphur in small and repeated doses. On the other hand, calomel may, notwithstanding the internal use of the above-named remedies, produce no such effect when applied to wounds or ulcers with secretions which rapidly become acid.

24. Clinical observation fully confirms the results obtained from chemical experiments and from those made on animals.

#### A CAUTION IN REGARD TO THE UNGUENTUM ZINCI OXIDI OF THE NEW U. S. PHARMACOPEIA.

Formerly the unguentum benzoini which forms the base of this ointment was prepared by boiling benzoin in lard. A small quantity only of the benzoin was in this way dissolved, sufficient however to obviate the rancidity of the lard. In consequence of the objections made to the mode of preparing it, that the resulting ointment was of a dirty-white colour, and deposited a portion of the benzoin when heated, it is directed in the new Pharmacopoeia that the ointment shall be made by melting the lard with the tincture of benzoin. By this process it appears that a larger portion of the benzoin is incorporated in the lard, and the zinc ointment made with it becomes hence irritating. In a case in which we had occasion recently to prescribe anew some benzoated zinc ointment, we were surprised to find that it proved highly irritating instead of soothing, as formerly. We were hence led to examine the ointment, and its appearance was so different from that previously used that we inferred the apothecary had made some mistake in its preparation, but we were informed by him that it had been prepared according to the formula of the new U. S. Pharmacopoeia.

We call attention to this because the use of the officinal ointment in the instance referred to caused great suffering, and if the experience of other practitioners should be in conformity with ours it will be prudent to abandon the new formula.—*Med. News.*

## PRACTICAL MEDICINE.

### TREATMENT OF CONSTIPATION.

Dr. Mascario, of Nice, in a communication to the *Lyon Medical*, observes that in treating constipation most practitioners confine themselves to enemata, laxatives, or more or less irritating purgatives, which in point of fact rather aggravate than cure the affection. He therefore wishes to make known what he says may be truly termed a "heroic" remedy, which he has employed during twelve years with such constant success that he cannot but regard it as infallible.

Constipation, as every one knows, may be produced either by intestinal excitement with deficiency of secretion (nervous constipation), or in consequence of deficient contraction of the muscular coat of the intestine. Here it is produced by atony or intestinal indolence, which bad anti-hygienic habits have induced and keep up. The prolonged contact of the feces with the rectum blunts the sensibility of the mucous and muscular tissues, and the synergical contraction of the upper portions of the large intestine either does not take place or does so in an insufficient degree, constipation being the result. In nervous constipation the following pill should be given: Pure sulphate of iron ten centigrammes, siccotine aloes five centigrammes, atropia from one-third to one-half of a milligramme. In the atonic form, for atropia one centigramme of powder of nuxvomica may be substituted. By the aid of these pills regular stools may be procured, even in the subjects of obstinate constipation due to ramollissement of the brain and chronic myelitis with paraplegia. Dr. Mascario gives from one to three pills immediately after dinner, the object being to produce one easy, natural, non-diarrhoeic evacuation. If more than this is effected, the dose is to be diminished, one or two pills sufficing in most cases. The use of these "anti-styptic" pills ought not to be continued indefinitely, a longer interval being allowed to elapse between their administration in proportion as the constipation diminishes, it being of importance to allow the organs to resume their spontaneous action without any auxiliary. If the constipation returns the pills can be again had recourse to.—*Med. Times and Gaz.*

### ERGOT IN CONGESTIVE HEADACHE.

Dr. R. Silver of Sidney, Ohio, states that ergot is better for headache than any other single article in the materia medica. He recommends it to patients who are subject to the malady thus:—R. Squibb's fl. ext. ergotæ, grs. x—xx for one dose. To be repeated every half hour until relief is obtained, or four or five doses are taken. The primary effect of opium is to produce hyperemia of the brain. To neutralize this action Dr. Silver employs with it fluid extract of ergot, and says the combination has a happy effect in cases in which opium alone would be contra-indicated by the fluxion of the brain. He does not regard ergot as a specific for headache, but thinks thousands of people are made miserable once a fortnight or once a month, who, by the use of it, may be made, for the time, comfortable.