

which mercury was given the quantity of bile secreted was diminished to nearly a half of what it was in the period preceding the administration of that drug. During the second period, the average amount of bile secreted was on the whole greater on the days when no mercury was given than on the other days.

Dr. Bennett comes to the conclusion that mercury, when administered so as to impair the general nutrition, lessens the biliary secretion; that given to dogs in either small, gradually augmented, or in large doses, it does not increase the biliary secretion. He finds that it does not influence it at all so long as neither purgation nor impairment of health are produced.

As regards the other drugs employed, doses of podophylline varying from two to eight grains, when given to dogs, diminished the solid constituents of the bile whether they produced purgation or not. Doses which produced purgation lessened both the fluid and solid constituents. Doses of the solid extract of taraxacum, varying from 60 to 240 grains, affected neither the biliary secretion, the bowels, nor the general health of the animal.—*Practitioner*, June, 1869.

Case of Coccydynia.

By W. R. FOX, M.D.,
SAN LEANDRO, CAL.

Mrs. K., aged 23, a resident of Wilmington, Ill., consulted me February 1st, 1869, about a severe pain in the region of the coccyx. I learned from her, that ten months previous to this date she was delivered of her first child, after a tedious labor. Her recovery from the accouchment was imperfect, suffering for months from symptoms of anæmia.

Although her general health had improved somewhat, under tonic and restorative treatment, yet she complained greatly of pain in the lower part of the back. The pain was very much aggravated by walking, sitting down, or rising from the sitting posture. Upon examination, I found the lower joint of the coccyx to be motionless and tender to the touch. The pelvic organs were in a healthy condition, except that there was slight prolapsus uteri. There was no vaginismus. I pronounced the case to be coccydynia, and advised amputation of a portion of the coccyx. As she had obtained no relief from treatment, but was growing worse, she readily consented to the operation.

The operation was performed in the following manner:—The patient was placed on the right side; and with the index-finger in the rectum, I

made firm pressure outwardly. Then an incision was made in the median line, down to the bone, and of sufficient length to admit of disarticulation at the second joint. The two lower bones were then separated from their attachments and severed at the second joint with small bone forceps. The wound was closed with metallic sutures, and the greater part healed by the first intention. My friend, Dr. E. R. Willard, assisted at the operation.

The result, in the case, was perfectly satisfactory. In a few weeks, Mrs. K. was attending to her household duties, free from pain, having greatly improved mentally and physically. A short time since, I received a note from her saying she was in the enjoyment of good health, the operation having been a success, &c.

Dr. J. C. Nott, formerly of Mobile, recommended and performed this operation 25 years ago, 15 years before the attention of the profession was called to it by Professor Simpson.—*Chicago Medical Expositor*, February, 1870.

On the Perchloride of Iron in Phthisis.

By E. SYMES THOMPSON, M.D., F.R.C.P.,
Assistant Physician, Hospital for Consumption, &c., Brompton.

* * * * This preparation is so universally applicable, that, with management, it may be given in almost every case in which steel can be borne.

That cod-liver oil and iron are now so universally admitted to be the remedies in consumption is a good illustration of the fact that—so far at least as common maladies are concerned—rational therapeutics is taking the place of that unreasoning credulity which would seek a specific for every ailment. The real specific treatment of phthisis is to put and keep the body in as perfect a state of health as possible; the weak digestive and assimilative power of the consumptive is due to poverty of the digestive juices, and is best remedied by enriching the blood, whence these fluids are derived.

The improvement of appetite, diminution of flatulence, &c., which occur under the perchloride of iron is often remarkable; cod-liver oil, and other fats previously refused, being digested without discomfort. It both checks diarrhoea and relieves constipation (by giving tone to the feeble muscular fibres of the bowels); it lessens night sweats—though these often call for oxide of zinc in addition—and is a valuable remedy in hæmoptysis.

It appears, too, to exercise a controlling influence over the inflammatory attacks so common in the course of phthisis. What we call "inflammation"