

laid up in bed with a painful rheumatic affection of one of her feet, which, after bathing and wrapping with Eethol, to my surprise was about the house again the next day. She swears by it, and will not allow me to be without it. I have also found it excellent in pruritus ani and erysipelas. I prescribe it through a druggist in Newburg, and have bought three bottles for myself. I am now using it in a case of ulcer in an old man, on the bottom of his foot, which is healing.—G. A. Gorse, M.D., Meadowbrook, N.Y.

LAXATIVE PROPERTIES OF PHENOLPHTHALEIN.—Phenolphthalein (dioxotriphenylphthalide), $C_{20}H_{14}O_4$, is obtained by causing concentrated sulphuric acid to act upon phthalic anhydride. In the pure state, it occurs as a white or faintly yellowish crystalline powder, devoid of taste, readily soluble in alcohol, but sparingly soluble in water. Up to a few years ago it was known to pharmacists only as an indicator. In 1902 the laxative properties of phenolphthalein were discovered, and accidentally at that. The substance was used as a means of distinguishing a certain wine, and it was found that this wine caused diarrhea. Phenolphthalein was then examined and found to have a laxative action when administered in small doses. Since that time it has been introduced by enterprising firms under various fanciful names As regards its fate in the system, it has been maintained that the drug remains unchanged in the acid stomach, but probably in the alkaline intestinal fluid forms a sodium compound—a very indiffusible salt of high osmotic pressure, which leads to the accumulation of much fluid in the bowels. Phenolphthalein appears to be absorbed only to a very slight degree, and to that extent to be excreted by the kidneys. According to Dr. Oscar Schwartz (*Munch. med. Wochenschr.*, 26, 1903), out of 3 grammes given to a dog, 2.55 grammes were recovered from the excreta; 10-gramme doses had no distinct effect on the elimination of sulphates in the animal, so there can be little or no decomposition with elimination of phenol in the system. When the urine is acid, as in health, the administration of phenolphthalein causes no coloration of that excretion, but when the urine is alkaline or neutral, it produces a deep crimson-red color. Tunicliffe (*Brit. Med. Journ.*, October 18, 1902), Vamossy (*Munch. med. Wochenschr.*, 26, 1903), and others laud the laxative action of phenolphthalein. They claim that it never causes any violent diarrhea or colic, that it does not irritate the kidneys, and that its depressant action on the circulation is less than that of magnesium