

Selections.

THE POSSIBILITY OF HASTENING SUCCESSFULLY THE CRISIS IN PNEUMONIA.—Undoubtedly, with our present methods of handling disease, many of the ordinary illnesses which make up the large part of the routine work of every practising physician are treated in as thoroughly a scientific and successful manner as they ever will be. If advancement is to be made, it must be done through radically different channels. Bacteriology seems to be at present the great field through which general medicine is to receive its impetus for the future.

In this connection it is encouraging to note the increased report of inoculation experiments with the toxine and antitoxine of the various pathogenic germs found in different diseases. The use of the ptomaines of the hog-cholera bacillus received notice, editorially, a year ago. Since then there have been many other reports, notably on the establishment of immunity from tetanus and diphtheria from inoculations with the chemical products of their bacilli.

One of the latest contributions to this subject is concerned with the possibility of conferring immunity against pneumonia in man by the injection of the products of the pneumococcus. G. and F. Klemperer (*Berliner klinische Wochenschrift*, August 24th and 31st, 1891) have been guided in their experiments by the knowledge that, in most instances, pneumonia, after a course lasting from five to seven days, terminates abruptly by crisis. In the course of a few hours the patient becomes remarkably better; the temperature comes down and the pulse becomes slower and firmer. Yet there has been, during the occurrence of this phenomenon, practically no change in the condition of the lungs, which still remained filled with fibrinous exudation. Pneumococci are still found after the crisis in great numbers in the sputa, and still retain all their virulence.

It seems, therefore, to these observers that the crisis in pneumonia does not depend on any change in the condition of the lungs or in the micro-organisms which are found in the disease, but that the improvement is due to the fact that the products of the pneumococcus modify their virulence in some manner after a certain period.

These German pathologists claim that the

pneumococcus, when introduced into the body of an animal, gives rise to a *pneumotoxine* which can be isolated. This pneumotoxine is able to produce a febrile reaction lasting several days, after which another substance, *antipneumotoxine*, is produced, which has the property of neutralizing pneumotoxine.

The manner in which immunity is conferred is explained by these observers in this way: Antipneumotoxine, which is found after the crisis in patients suffering from pneumonic infection, has the power of neutralizing the active poison of the disease, and allows nature to reassert herself.

These observers have tried the injection of antipneumotoxine in a few patients suffering from pneumonia. The antipneumotoxine which they use for this purpose they obtain from the blood-serum of animals in the stage of pneumonic crisis. They found that in all these patients a hypodermic injection of four to six cubic centimetres of serum was followed, in from six to twelve hours, by a considerable fall in the temperature, with slowing of the pulse and respiration.

Of course, further investigation of these conclusions, especially in the hands of other observers, is necessary before deciding on their practical value.—*Univ. Med. Mag.*

CHROMIC ACID IN THE TREATMENT OF CYSTS.—Within the last few months I have treated with chromic acid three cases of ranula and seven of cystic goitre with such satisfactory results that I venture to make them known. The three cases of ranula occurred in two males and one female; the former had received previous treatment without any benefit; the latter had not sought advice before. All three had large cysts, and the mode of treatment followed was the same in each. A portion of the cyst was cut away, and the contents washed out. A saturated solution of chromic acid was then freely applied with a chromic acid carrier to several points of the cyst wall. At the end of the week, the cavity having much diminished, the acid was again applied, and in from a fortnight to three weeks the wound had healed and all signs of the tumor had disappeared. There were no bad symptoms. The seven cases of cystic goitre were in females. The tumors