

rule, if the acetate, one of the most soluble forms of lead, should be entirely innocuous, and the carbonate, one of the least soluble, alone endowed with poisonous properties? It is true, that small doses of the carbonate would be rendered soluble by the acids of the gastric juice, being converted by them into the chloride and the acetate, (assuming, in accordance with the general opinion of chemists, that the hydrochloric or acetic acid, or both, exist in the secretion of the stomach.) What then will become of the acetic, when swallowed? If it meets with acetate acid in the stomach, it will remain acetate still; if with hydrochloric acid, it will be converted, like the carbonate, into the chloride of lead. The two substances, therefore, when they begin to act on the system, and are absorbed into the blood, will be in precisely the same chemical state. Considering the acid nature of the gastric secretion, and its probable action on all chemical compounds capable of being affected by its ingredients, is not Dr. Thomson's idea of the conversion of acetate of lead into carbonate, by the free carbonic acid in the alimentary canal, evidently a fallacious one? And is not therefore his employment of distilled vinegar in conjunction with the acetate, an illusory protection against the dangers of lead poisoning?

But without further argument on the chemistry of the question, it is sufficient to state that Dr. Thomson's theory is in opposition to the concurrent testimony of the best toxicological authorities of the day, among whom I may cite Orfila, Apjohn, Taylor, Christison and Devergie. The latter writer, whose authority is second to none, distinctly states that the poisonous activity of the compounds of lead is in direct proportion to their solubility. Christison and Taylor both (conclusively, it seems to me) combat the opinion of Thomson. I will quote a few words from the last mentioned of those authors, bearing directly upon the practical point at issue: "So far as observations on man have yet extended, the carbonate has no more action than the common acetate. Dr. C. G. Mitscherlich has lately proved that the acetate is a poisonous salt, and that when mixed with acetic acid it is more energetic than when given in the neutral state. This fact clearly shews that the poisonous effects cannot solely depend on the assumed conversion of the salt to the state of carbonate." (Taylor's Med. Jurisp., 2d ed., p. 169.)

This result of Mitscherlich's researches is precisely what a consideration of the general laws of toxicology would lead us to expect. Let physicians, therefore, take care how they rely on vinegar, or dilute acetic acid, as a safeguard against the poisonous effects of the acetate of lead. —*Stethoscope*.

## SURGERY.

*On Treatment of Paraphymosis in Children.* By Dr. RAU.—Since 1848, six cases of this affection have come under Dr. Rau's notice, the paraphymosis having existed from twelve to twenty-four, and in one instance for thirty-six hours, so that very considerable tumefaction and inflammation of the glans and prepuce were present. Attempts at reduction by Walthers' and other methods proved fruitless; but this was easily accomplished after the application, for from twelve to twenty-four hours, of the following ointment:—*Ung. Hyd. Ciner.*,  $\frac{3}{4}$ ; *Ext. Conii vel Belladon.*, 3j ad 3ij. In the case which had continued for thirty-six hours, *Aq. saturni* was also, on account of the excoriations, applied for thirty-six hours, after which the reduction was easily effected. —*Casper's Wochenschrift*, 1851, No. 21.

*On the Abortive Treatment of Gonorrhœa by Chloroform.* By M. VENOT.—M. Venot of Bordeaux, states, as the result of a twelvemonth's experience, that injections of chloroform, though of little avail in confirmed gonorrhœa, are possessed of a complete abortive efficacy, if employed during the first week. —*Bull. de Thérap.*, tom. xl, p. 184.

*A Case of Puncture of the Stomach, with Protrusion for six hours.* (Reported by Chas. Wm. Ashby, M. D., of Culpeper C. H.)—A negro boy, 6 years old, the property of Mr. R. B., fell upon a pair of sheep shears, which he had in his hand, whilst running down a hill. The instrument penetrated the stomach obliquely from above, just grazing the left side of the sternum and edges of the ribs, making a flap-like orifice in the integuments.

I was called in consultation by my friend, Dr. P. C. Slaughter, and found