

ment, not mechanically, as in the case of the pelvic contents, but chemically, by the absorption into the blood of the ptomaines given off by the germs of putrefaction. We have all observed the effects upon the mind of the retention of bile in the blood during an attack of jaundice. The patient becomes despondent, and his brain can no longer perform its most ordinary duties with ease or satisfaction, and he sees everything from a pessimistic point of view. Now, this may be directly due to the action of bile upon the nerve cells of the brain or indirectly through the digestive tract, where, owing to the absence of bile, which is a powerful antiseptic, the germs of putrefaction swallowed with the food have full play and cause rapid decomposition of its contents. The resulting ptomaines and gases are soon absorbed into the circulation, and carried in large quantities to the brain, and the latter, being thus bathed in a pernicious instead of a pure and nourishing fluid, is unable to form sound and happy conclusions. The improvement of the mind following a course of treatment of the liver and the cleaning out of the intestines is well known. In a recent number of our excellent contemporary, the *Alienist and Neurologist*, several cases are reported, which would seem to prove that extreme cases of constipation may result in insanity. One of the cases was that of a man with suicidal tendencies, who had refused food for a long time, and who was restored to mental soundness after being relieved of an immense quantity of accumulated feces. Another was a young man who was morose, quarrelsome and suspicious, who was restored to health by clearing out the bowels.

We think, therefore, that in works on insanity, constipation should be removed from the list of *symptoms* and placed near the head of the list of *causes* of this distressing malady. At any rate, we cannot err if we commence the treatment in every

case of mental disease by obtaining and maintaining an effective cleansing of the digestive tract.

BOOK NOTICES.

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THE U. S. PHARMACOPEIA "1890" which will be published during 1893, adopts in great measure the METRIC SYSTEM of Weights and Measures; this will doubtless create much confusion in the minds of Physicians and Druggists, and lead to many misunderstandings and errors. In order to provide a guide to the proper dosage, etc., Dr. Geo. M. Gould, author of "The New Medical Dictionary" has prepared a very complete table of the Official and Unofficial Drugs, with doses in both the METRIC and ENGLISH systems; this table is to be published in P. Blakiston, Son & Co's Physicians' Visiting List, for 1893, together with a short description of the Metric System.

THE OCTOBER HOME-MAKER.

THE HOME-MAKER magazine for October, Vol. ix., No. 1, appears as a brand-new magazine from cover to cover. It is much larger and greatly improved in every respect, although the price remains at \$2 a year and 20 cents a copy.

The contributors in the October number rank high.

Mayo W. Hazeltine has an article on the Federal Elections or Force Bill, and gives both the Republican extreme view and the Democratic extreme view,