

EFFECTS OF MERCURY.

From a notice in the *Dublin Medical Press and Circular* of Dr. Murison's new book on Diseases of the Liver, &c., we find the following :—

“Take, for instance, the question of the action of mercury on which Dr. Hughes Bennett has been engaged in experiments for the British Medical Association, and whose conclusions thereanent so surprised the great body of practitioners. Dr. Murison has evidently carefully weighed the evidence, and he has come to a conclusion which is likely at present to receive the assent of the majority. He thinks that “mercury and allied purgatives probably produce bilious stools by irritating the upper part of the bowel, and sweeping on the bile before there is time for its absorption.” He recognizes the fact that articles of food frequently give rise to similar effects, and thinks that their action is perfectly similar. From this we might suppose that other purgatives should be substituted more frequently than they are, and assuredly this view supports the American preference for podophyllin, or, as it is called sometimes in the States, “vegetable calomel.” We could certainly say much in its favor. Dr. Murison considers calomel of great use in congestion of the liver, but if it increased the secretion of the bile, it would have an injurious effect.—He thinks it likely that “irritation of the duodenum by purgatives, may be reflected to the gall-bladder, and cause it to contract, and that the evacuation of the viscus may account in part for this increased quantity of bile on the stools.” Dr. Murison's is a handy sized volume. The former half treats of enlargements of the liver, under the division of painful and painless enlargements. The latter includes gallstones, jaundice, hepatic pain, contractions, and abdominal dropsy. The cases upon which the lectures are founded are well selected and carefully related. Their study is likely to lead to more careful diagnosis and treatment.”—*Boston Med. and Surg. Journal*.

A CLERICAL SURGEON.—Father Helyen, a Catholic priest of Boom, in Belgium, performed the Cæsarian operation on a young woman in order to baptize the infant before it died. The mother appears to have been living when the operation was commenced, but both mother and child succumbed. In his defence, the priest said that he performed the operation in obedience to the direct instructions of the archbishop. The instructions are now to be cancelled, and the clerical surgeon tried for murder.—*Med. and Surg. Reporter*.