

most positively that this will be found the best. I do not really think I am stating too much when I say that it is almost a specific. At any rate I shall be quite willing to leave it for my professional brethren to disprove or endorse the opinion held.

### Pregnancy Mistaken for the Menopause.

Mistakes in diagnosis, Dr. Brown remarked, are common; to report them is comparatively rare. But it is as much the surgeon's duty to report his mistakes and failures as his successes. The following case may prove instructive in this light.

Mrs. C—— N——, aged forty-five, a native of Maine, originally of good constitution, put herself under his care April 19th, 1869. She had been at a "water cure" for two weeks previously. She had been sick for three years, unable to walk a few rods without assistance.

On making a vaginal examination, he found the os large, open, ulcerated; the uterus about four times the normal size, the sound passing readily four inches. She had, in addition to the ordinary sympathetic symptoms hematemesis, with almost constant pain in the epigastric region, and internal hemorrhoids. About nine months previous to her arrival in Stoneham, she had irregular menstruation, which stopped about four months previous to her arrival. There was still a profuse vaginal discharge, for some time tinged with blood, but latterly dark-colored, with an offensive odor. Subject occasionally to spasms, with rigors.

She had had seven living children; eldest, twenty-six years; youngest, nine years old; no miscarriage.

Dr. H. R. Storer visited her in consultation on April 24th, and found substantially the same state of things as above described. She miscarried April 29th; the fetus about four months advanced; placenta adherent, removed by the hand; and she made a good recovery. She was afterwards treated for ulceration successfully, and left for her home in Maine, much improved. The gastric affection was also greatly bettered.

This is one of the cases where even the most experienced physician would be likely to err in diagnosis. The length of time (nine years) which had elapsed since the birth of the last child; the time of life (forty-five years), when the change might be reasonably expected; the extensive disease of the os and neck; the length of time (three years) during which the patient had remained a helpless invalid; the cachectic expression of countenance, with pain and offensive discharge, were all calculated to throw us off our guard, and point to

the existence of a polypus or a fibroid tumor. Neither Dr. Storer nor himself believed that the case was cancer; although several of her relations and acquaintances expected that that would be the decision.

Dr. Storer stated his satisfaction at Dr. Brown's case having been reported. He had himself in several instances reported to medical societies cases where, in default of the probability of the existence of pregnancy, he had been similarly mistaken. *Gynecological Journal*.

### The Cholagogue Action of Mercury and Podophyllin.

An investigation of the action or want of action of mercury and taraxacum in influencing the secretion of bile, is something like an inquiry by Dr. Colenso into the authenticity of the Book of Numbers. It is something to make the cheeks of many an old-fashioned practitioner turn pale, to shake the whole foundation of his therapeutic creed, to symbolize the end of all things at least regards drugs. Podophyllin is but a juvenile. That podophyllin, albeit lauded in no measured terms for its flow-of-bile-producing qualities, should prove a traitor, was a blow which some little exertion of moral courage could enable the believer to survive; but that any doubt should be felt about the capabilities of calomel and blue pill, and extractum taraxaci, in "acting upon the liver," must have conveyed a shock in various quarters, from which we should imagine there are many still suffering. The investigation, however, has taken place. It has been conducted by men of proved ability. Its results are here placed before the reader in a very intelligible form, and we come for our part, that at these results we are not at all surprised. The experiments clearly show, what careful observation in practice must have taught the unprejudiced, that faith in the cholagogue action of these drugs has been misplaced, that our trust in blue pill from this particular point of view has been as ill-judged as it was strong, and that the days are rapidly drawing to a close when a practitioner of medicine will be able, without subjecting himself to ridicule, to inform his patient that his complaint is "all liver," and requires dry doses of mercury, podophyllin, or taraxacum.

In the experiments adopted by the committee dogs were employed. The fundus of the gall bladder was attached to the abdominal wall, and a fistulous opening made in it through which the whole of the bile secreted for at least twenty-four hours at a time was collected.

It will be observed that during the five days