

operation on the cervix for the promotion of involution must only be looked upon as a means to an end. It is all-important, therefore, that the system should be put into the best possible condition. Local and constitutional treatment must join hands, otherwise we will be frequently disappointed. In defective nutrition the uterus suffers in common with other organs, and this alone greatly predisposes to arrest of involution.

BISMUTH IN INFLAMMATORY AFFECTIONS OF THE INTESTINAL MUCOUS TRACT.

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In a case of acute dysentery which came under my care lately, I gave bismuth tris nitrate and opium as the medicinal treatment, in doses of fifteen grains of the former to one grain of the latter, every two or three hours. The symptoms became no worse but did not improve, so I doubled the dose of bismuth and continued the opium as before. The pain speedily became worse and finally agonizing, after about twenty-four hours' treatment with the increased dose of bismuth. The evacuations became excessively frequent and of a garlic-like smell, while the same odor was readily perceptible in the breath. Thinking the bismuth might be impure and contain arsenic, I changed the treatment to plumbi acetat. grs. ij., opium gr. j., every two hours, with rapid improvement in pain, speedy fall of the temperature which had been rising rapidly, and a rapidly lengthening interval between the stools, which, with the breath, soon lost their garlic-like odor.

In twenty-four hours the motions had diminished to one in six to twelve hours, and the pain almost disappeared as long as the medicine was continued. I then gave pulv. kino co., grs. xx., every 2-3 hours and continued it with lengthening intervals until convalescent. I now wrote to Messrs. Lyman Bros., of Toronto, from whom I had procured the sample of bismuth which I had been using, and stated my suspicions as to its purity and the symptoms of irritant poisoning produced by it. They promptly submitted some of the bismuth from which mine was taken to Prof. Hays for analysis, who found no arsenic; the only impurities it contained being traces of iron and

lime. I may state that the bismuth was of Howard's manufacture, a name which is considered a guarantee for purity. Nor could the bismuth have become contaminated with arsenic after I received it from Toronto, as I kept it in a bottle which had contained only bismuth for years. This case is instructive as it shews:

1st. That bismuth may become soluble in the intestinal canal, probably through chemical combination with the sulphuretted hydrogen so commonly found as a result of the decay of albuminous foods or dysenteric stools, which usually contains more or less (in bad cases considerable) albuminous material, through chemical change a sulphur and a hydrogen compound are formed, the former giving the dark color so often observed in the stools of patients taking bismuth, and the hydrogen giving the garlic-like odor to the stools, and by absorption into the circulation and inhalation by the lungs, to the breath also.

2nd. That bismuth, when so changed, acts as an irritant to the mucous lining of the intestines.

In these points a similarity to arsenic is shown, a similarity at which we need not be surprised when we view the close chemical relationship existing between the two metals.

The practical point that I would adduce is this: use bismuth with caution in active inflammatory affections of the intestinal tract, where rapid chemical and fermentative change is going on, as where the changes which render the bismuth poisonous are most readily effected.

Correspondence

To the Editor of the CANADA LANCET.

SIR,—In reading, not long ago, I came across the following professional aphorisms of Amédée Latour, which are sufficiently curious and shrewd to merit reproduction. I have endeavored to make the translation as literal as possible:

1. Life is short, patients fastidious and the brethren deceptive.
2. Practice is a field of which tact is the manure.
3. Patients are comparable to flannel, neither can be quilted without danger.
4. The physician who absents himself runs the same risk as the lover who leaves his mistress; he is pretty sure to find himself supplanted.
5. Would you rid yourself of a tiresome patient; present your bill.
6. The patient who