

ministered for a long period, or it would not have been found in such abundance, and diffused over so great an extent; it being estimated from the quantity obtained, that at least 30 drachms must have been contained in the body. It is of importance to remark, that although the body had been buried for twenty-one months, and no traces of the brain, heart, or other muscles remained, the poison was yet detectible in the remaining portion of the lungs and intestines, and that it had undergone a partial reduction through the putrefactive process in the body itself. That the acetate was not, however, completely decomposed, was seen by procuring from the intestinal contents a soluble salt. This shows also that the acetate, like other metallic salts soluble in water, more or less resists the putrefactive process, and that the decay of organic structures impregnated with it may be delayed,—the putrefactive process, which ordinarily commences in the abdominal organs, being in this case much less advanced in the large intestine than in other parts of the body. The finding so considerable a portion of the lead in the lungs, is also therapeutically interesting, in regard to the administration of the substance in hæmoptysis and phthisis.

It seems that the minister, who was formerly mild in his manners, became latterly morose and impatient, exhibiting signs of the peculiar melancholy generated in *tabes metallica*; while with this were conjoined all the ordinary symptoms of gradual lead-poisoning, even to the occurrence of attacks of paralysis.—*Buchner's Repert.*

ON THE DETECTION OF MERCURY IN THE BODY OF A PERSON DYING OF MERCURIAL CACHEXY.

By M. Gorup-Besanez.

That quicksilver is one of the metals capable of absorption into the economy is a well-known fact, detected as it has been by various chemists, not only in the blood, but in the secretions of various organs, and especially the saliva, and in the structure of the organs themselves. But as to the mode of its distribution, the duration of its presence in the various organs, and whether it is found in all or certain tissues only, are points yet to be investigated. Dr. Gorup-Besanez relates the results of a recent investigation of the body of a woman, who was long (twenty-five years) laboriously engaged in silvering looking-glasses, but who, from the convulsive tremors that were induced, had been obliged to desist from her occupation for a year prior to death.

The somewhat collapsed brain did not entirely fill the skull, and the dura mater was of a reddish-blue from the venous congestion. The consistency of the brain was firmer than usual. The lungs were hepatized, loaded with dark-coloured blood, and non-crepitant.

The chemical results obtained by following the processes of Fresenius and Babo were as follows. The lungs and heart gave no traces of mercury; a very small quantity was detected in the liver, and none in the bile. A doubtful precipitate was thrown down upon the gold plate by the brain, while the spinal column presented no traces. That any remains at all should be found after a year is remarkable, and is confirmatory of other facts, proving how long certain metals, e. g. antimony, may be retained in the economy. That the liver was the only organ in which it could then be detected, confirms the doctrine that metallic poisonous substances are longest found in that organ.—*Buchner's Repert.*