

thartics; and he has never been obliged to resort to opium at all, sleep having succeeded the active unloading of the hepatic system. It has long since struck my mind that the invasion of the disease springs from a sudden, or, it may be, a gradual poisoning of the blood, by means of a chemical alteration in the bile and urine; and that some of the elements of one or both of these secretions are carried through the circulation. My chief reasons for drawing these conclusions are the following—The disease has given way in a decided manner under sharp purgation with calomel, &c., and the improvement is invariably coexistent with the passage of numerous dark, offensive, and deeply-bilious evacuations. Again, a very large number of cases, and those of the worst form, present themselves with symptoms poison by urea. It is stated that they have had one or more fits; these fits are distinctly epileptic, and exactly resembling those attacks which sometimes occur in persons labouring under albuminous disease of the kidney, and in whom the disappearance of urea from the urine, and its presence in the circulating fluids have been repeatedly detected by Dr. Christison and others. In fatal cases of delirium tremens an epileptic fit is often the forerunner of death.”

It strikes me that Mr. Corfe is too limited in his views; that the poisonous state of the blood is brought about by the alteration of the bile and the urine; and that some of the symptoms he mentions may be caused by the presence of urea in it, resulting from the nearly complete suppression of urine in most of the cases. The adoption of them would tend to localise the affection in the liver and kidneys; while the vitiated state of the stomach and small intestines show an early alteration in the chyme itself, from which the blood is

directly derived in a state that even normal glands could not perform their usual functions.

I have seen in this disease the urine entirely suppressed for days without epileptic fits or the effects of urea in the blood being apparent; on the other hand, I have often seen these results occur instantaneously, and without the slightest chance of their being produced by such a cause; while the symptoms and course of the disease would tend to show that the vitiated secretions of the liver and kidneys were the effect of the state of the digestive functions resulting from the disease and the habits of the patient, whereby the blood submitted to the action of these glands is so changed that their secretions are altered, and a tendency to inflammation in their substance induced; just as we see exemplified in pyralism. Mercury enters the blood, the secretion from the salivary glands is changed, and an enlargement and inflammation of their substance takes place.

The functions of both the liver and kidneys are most important in preserving a healthy state of the blood; but we frequently see the bile, when secreted from normal blood, prevented by mechanical obstruction from entering the duodenum, and taken into the circulation by absorption without the bilious derangements of malarious fevers or delirium tremens being produced; and the urine may be retained in the bladder, or even not secreted for days, without the poisonous effects of urea being manifested. In Britain you often have most perfect jaundice from mechanical obstructions, without malarious fever; and I have seen a like cause produce the same result in malarious countries, and in parties subject to fevers, without a single symptom of them being present showing evidently that the state of the