Toxicological Action of Prussic Acid; Atropine as Antidote.

M. W. Preyer has arrived at the following most important conclusions from a series of ingenious arguments and experiments. In comparatively moderate, but yet fatally poisonous doses, prussic acid acts by very suddenly and completely depriving the blood of its oxygen; the phenomena being only an exaggerated and intensified representation of what occurs when an animal is made to breathe unmixed hydrogen for some time. Supposing the poisoning to have been accomplished, then, by a comparatively moderate dose, resaturation of the blood with oxygen, if it can be quickly enough accomplished, will infallibly restore the animal to life. On the other hand, prussic acid, given in *very large* doses, paralyzes the heart, and is absolutely fatal. Those cases in which there is apnœa, and the heart is beating, remain open for treatment. M. Preyer was led to believe that the true physiological antidote for prussic acid was an agent which (without producing any other important poisonous effects) would paralyze the peripheral branches of the vagus in the lungs and in the heart; and, on the other hand, stimulate the central nervous apparatus of respiration in such a manner as to produce rapid respirations. He now makes the very important announcement, that sulphate of atropia acts precisely in this way, and he has demonstrated, on rabbits and guinea-pigs, that the subcutaneous injection of a very small dose of this agent, if performed pretty quickly after the injection of the prussic acid, is an unfailing antidote. Apparently he would recommend the injection of quite small doses (1 75th grain *l*)—*Cin. Med. Rep.*

Two Hundred Dollar Doctors.

Henry Ward Beecher thus discourses about doctors:

Nothing is more needful than a reform in our medical schools. Only think of dragging students through two or three years of lectures and study, to do what can be done in *three months!* Read the following genuine letter, and see what a man can do.

"DEAR SIR:—I take the liberty of writing to you to inquire if you know anything of Professor ——, and of the —— Medical University. I wrote to Professor —— asking him his terms, and he has replied, telling me that he can fit me for the practice of medicine in three months, charge $200. I desire to study medicine that I may be enabled to lessen some of the suffering that I see about me, and as there is no one in New York whom I know personally, I thought I would write and ask you whether I can depend upon what Mr. —— has written me, and if the graduates of the —— Medical University are able successfully to practice the profession of medicine. I will feel deeply indebted to you for any information relative to the above."

This school, or University, as it is styled, is too obscure. A man who can in three months' time qualify a novitiate to practice medicine, ought not to hide his light as Professor —— does, Who is he Where has *he* studied? What is this surely divine art of teaching? Can we not overcome the modesty of this genius, and send to him the thousands of medical students that are spending two or three years in this expensive city under prosy professors, who do not dream of turning out a complete practitioner in medicine in less than six or eight years!

There *are* eccentric and somewhat out-of-fashion doctors who pretend that there ought to be some regard to moral principle in medical practice; to whatever school a man belongs they hold that he should become thoroughly acquainted with the whole human system—with its laws and functions, with its morbid as well as normal conditions? that he should be familiar with the whole range of material agents, and with the results of the largest and wisest experience in the use of them; that he should study with minute care and diligence questions of temperament, habit, constitution; and, in short, that he should include an amonnt of knowledge of which the merest elements could not be gained in less than three years.

If you wish to be *such* a doctor, you had better give a wide berth to such fellows as Professor ——, and betake yourself to established medical institutions; and make up your mind that it will require more than three months, or three years to make a doctor unto life. A doctor unto death can be fitted up in far less time.—*Med. & Surg. Reporter.*

Chlorodyne.

In Mr. Squire's "Companion to the Pharmacopœia," page 80, under "Liquor Chloroformi Compositus," will be found a formula which has been represented as the composition of this popular medicine. It is as follows:—Chloroform, 4 oz.; ether, 1 oz.; rectified spirit, 4 oz.; treacle, 4 oz.; extract of licorice, 2½ oz.; muriate of morphia, 8 grs.; oil of peppermint, 16 minims; syrup, 17½ oz.; prussic acid (2 per cent), 2 oz. Dissolve the muriate of morphia and the oil of peppermint in the rectified spirit; mix the chloroform and ether with this solution; dissolve the extract of licorice in the syrup, and add the treacle; shake these two solutions together, and add the prussic acid."—*Ib.*

Glyco-inosine.

Under this name a preparation is sold in Europe for sweetening acidulous wines, at the rate of one thaler, Pruss., the pound. On examination it proves to be common air-slaked lime.—*Dr. Hoger.* —*Ib.*

Death from Hypodermic Injection.—Lantessen reports (*Journ. fur Kinderkrankheiten*, 1868, 217—225), that he saw a child die in a few moments with convulsions, after he had injected several drops of liquor ferri sesquichlor., for nævus maternus. Dissection revealed large coagula in the roots of the great veins at the heart, and in the right auricle and ventricle. He supposes that a vein of some size was wounded, and that the astringent thus got into the general circulation, coagulated the blood, and finally produced paralysis of the heart. He recommends that the flow of blood into neigbouring venous plexuses should be prevented by pressure when we perform this operation.—*Med. and Surg. Reporter.*