

IMPORTANCE OF THE PURITY OF CHLORAL HYDRATE.

Dr. Oscar Liebreich has recently published a paper in the *Berliner Klinische Wochenschrift*, in which he calls attention to the important subject of the purity of chloral hydrate, and the effect which its deterioration may produce on the patient to whom it is administered, and on its reputation as a remedy. The case he says, is different from that of such a substance as quinia, the adulteration of which will only reduce, but not pervert, the proper action of the drug. With chloral and other substances prepared by analogous chemical processes, the result of the manufacture may be the formation of compounds which, if administered, produce an altogether different result from that intended. The process of manufacture is one which requires great care; and it seems that it is at least difficult to insure the purity of chloral if made in large quantities. Liebig himself, who discovered it, never attempted to make more than a few grammes at once; and Dr. Liebreich was so convinced, when he brought it into notice as a medicinal agent, that purity was necessary for success, that the first supplies were made under his immediate superintendence. At present it is manufactured in various places, and the result is that in some parts of the continent, notably in Saxony and Switzerland, it has fallen into disrepute. Dr. Liebreich has made a collection of specimens of the drug used in cases where it has failed to produce its proper action, and possesses, he says, some horrible chemical compounds which he would not venture to give to a human being. He prefers the crystallized form of chloral hydrate, as the most stable. It may contain hydrochloric acid: this is no disadvantage if the proportion remain the same; but if it increases it indicates that the formation of dangerous compounds may be going on. Sometimes the hypnotic action is increased: this he attributes to the production of chlorine compounds, which are more readily changed into chloroform than chloral itself is. An acid reaction arising from the formation of trichloroacetic acid does not show that the chloral is unfit for use, though it weakens its action. In pure chloral this action is limited, while impure chloral is liable to the constantly increasing production of acid compounds—not trichloroacetic acid—of a deleterious nature. Dr. Liebreich remarks that the German Pharmacopœia is in error in fixing the boiling point of chloral hydrate at 95 °Cent. (203° F.). This, he says, is correct for anhydrous chloral, but the boiling-point of chloral hydrate is not constant.—*Brit. Med. Jour.*, March 21, 1874.

DR. O'FLANAGAN, A MODEL ADVERTISEMENT.

An Eastern Journal, not of the regular school, contains a long advertisement of a celebrated physician, from which we take the following passages, commending them to "Dr. Aborn" and such like:

Have yeez pains in yer bones, or a botherin' ache
In yer jintz afther dancin' a jig at a wake?

Have yeez caught a black eye from some loud-
erin' whack?

Have yeez vertebral twists in the sphine av yer
back?

Whin yer walkin' the strates are yees likely to
fall?

Don't whisky sit well on yer shtomach at all?
Sure it's botherin' nonsense to sit down and wape,
Whin a bit av a powdher 'ill put yeez to slape;
Shtate yer symptoms, me darlins, and niveryeez
doubt,

But as srue as a gun I can shtraighten yeez out,
Coom thin, ye poor craythurs, and don't yeez
be scairt!

Have yeez batin' and lumberin' thumps at the
hairt?

Wid ossification and acceleration,
Wid attenuation and regurgitation,
Wid amaciation and axacervation,
Wid expectoration and wake cercula^{tion},
Wid praecipitation and hapitazation,
Wid praoccupa^{tion} and avaporation,
Wid hallycination and acrid sacration,
Wid black aruptation and putrifaction,
Wid great jacititation and cowgulation,
Wid quare titillation and cowlid perspiration?
Be me sowi! but I'll bring yer woes to complation;
Unless yer in love—thin ye' re past all salvation.
—*Pacific Journal*, July, '74.

POWDERED MEAT.

Powdered meat is prepared by Dannecy, *pharmacien en chef* of the hospitals of Bordeaux, by finely chopping the fresh meat, spreading it upon muslin, and drying it rapidly in a current of air. A friable mass is formed, which readily yields a brown, nearly odorless powder, possessing a feeble saline taste, and of which one part represents five parts of fresh meat. It is used and readily taken by patients by adding a tea-spoonful to a cup of beef-tea or soup, or by spreading upon bread. For children it is mixed in certain proportions with the ingredients for biscuits.—*American Practitioner*.

DEAR, BUT NOT GOOD.

The *Times*, of India, has a story how the Dewan of the Guicowar of Baroda, being ill, sent for a doctor, who desired the Dewan to send him next day a bottle of his urine for examination. The doctor used the Hindustani term *karoova* to express urine, and this term was not understood by the patient; but being desirous of obeying the doctor and sending him what he wanted, the Dewan rummaged the whole town for *karoova*. At last a crafty fellow from Delhi offered to supply it, and sent a bottle, for which he charged fifty rupees. The Dewan tasted the liquid, and pronounced it not nice. However, next morning he sent the bottle to the doctor, saying that it had cost fifty rupees, and a great deal of trouble, and after all, was not nice! The doctor "smole a smile," and then explained the real meaning of *karoova* to the unhappy Dewan.—*London Med. Times and Gazette*.