

## HOMŒOPATHIC PILULES.

The *Practitioner* (April, 1873) has recently analyzed some of the more commonly used homœopathic pilules of the "second dilution," purchased of two leading homœopathic pharmacists of London, with the following results:—

*Sulphate of Copper Pills.*—First sample, no copper could be detected in 100 pilules; second sample, no copper could be detected in 200 pilules. The quantity of sulphate of copper in the above pilules should have been 0.006 and 0.012 grain respectively. If even as little as 0.0001 of a grain of the sulphate had been present, it would have been detected.

*Corrosive Sublimata Pilules.*—It was just possible to detect mercury in 200 of the pilules. The amount was, however, less than corresponds to 0.0005 grain of corrosive sublimate, whereas 0.012 grain of this salt should have been present.

*Nux Vomica Pilules, Belladonna Pilules.*—No strychnia or atropia respectively could be detected, even when 300 pilules were employed. In the case of nux vomica, e. g., 300 pilules should have contained about one ten thousandth part of a grain of strychnia. Now, so small a quantity as one seventy thousandth part of a grain of strychnia is well known to give distinct reactions to chemical tests, but no reaction could be obtained in the present case.

So far, then, it would appear that we must place any cures following the use of pilules similar to the above to the credit of the imagination. The *Practitioner* promises to continue the subject on a future occasion, and the further results shall be laid before our readers.

## PROPAGATION OF TYPHOID FEVER BY MILK.

In the summer of 1872 an epidemic broke out in the village of Armley (in the borough of Leeds, England) which Dr. Ballard, in an official report just published, proves, beyond reasonable doubt, was propagated through the medium of the milk supply. It will be remembered that a similar epidemic broke out at Islington, and which Dr. Ballard proved to be the same cause.

Dr Ballard in his report of the epidemic at Armley, shows how remarkably the fever picked out the customers of the dairyman, who is believed to have contracted the fever in a neighboring locality five or six weeks before the epidemic began; how the largest consumers were among the earliest and the smallest among the latest attacked; and from the different facts stated and line of argument indicated he comes to the conclusion that the outbreak was due to the distribution of milk from the particular dairy of the infected dairyman, which milk had in some way become contaminated with the poison of enteric fever. He then proceeds to show how this contamination may have occurred, and proves that a well in the dairyman's yard used for dairy and domestic purposes was liable to be contaminated by the contents of a privy and a dung-hole, into one of which, if not both, the discharges of the dairyman when ill would be thrown; and he further shows that the sudden outburst of fever occurred within a fortnight of the

period when the well would most probably have become polluted in the foregoing manner, while the time of its cessation followed the closure of the well at an interval consistent with the theory of the polluted water (added doubtless to the milk) being the efficient agent in the propagation of the fever.

## RELATION OF THE PULSE TO THE CONDITION OF THE STOMACH.

Important observations have recently been made by Mayer and Pribram on the reflex relations of the stomach to the centres of innervation for the circulation (*Centralblatt*, March 22, 1873). The previous experiments of Goltz showed, what has ever since been accepted, that irritation of the wall of the stomach reduces the frequency of the pulse. The present experiments have determined that this slowing is accompanied by a rise in the arterial blood pressure; and that the same result is obtained whether the irritation applied to the gastric wall is electrical or mechanical—for example, pinching the stomach with forceps. The rise in the blood-pressure is plainly reflex, and its causation from contraction of the smaller or peripheral arteries. Similar results were obtained by inserting a bladder in the stomach and inflating it. On the other hand, the application of cold to the stomach, either by means of iced water or by ice itself, yielded no positive result, provided mechanical irritation was carefully avoided. Further experiments seemed to refer the effect on the circulation to irritation of the serous and muscular coats of the stomach while irritation of the mucous membrane only did not evidently affect the pulse.

These results may help to explain the sudden death which is frequently seen in severe injuries to the stomach. The experiments point out that the opinion of Guy is also in agreement with the results at which they have arrived—that the frequency of the pulse falls under vegetable diet.—[*Med. Times and Gaz.*, May 10, 1873.]

Alex. Macalister has compiled a descriptive Catalogue of Muscular Anomalies in Human Anatomy (*Trans. Royal Irish Acad.*, vol. xxv.), which will prove of great value to all students of this branch of anatomy. He has made a careful search through the extensive literature of the subject, has classified the variations which have been described, and has incorporated with them a number of examples that have come under his own observation.

Mr. Lutwidge, the Commissioner in Lunacy who, while visiting an asylum near Salisbury, was stabbed in the right temple by one of the patients, died on the 28th ult., a few minutes before the arrival from London of Sir James Paget. The fatal blow was inflicted with a long nail, and was followed by a paralytic affection, from which he never rallied.

In connexion with the Social Science Congress, to be held at Norwich, from the 1st to the 8th of October next, there will be an exhibition of educational, sanitary, and domestic appliances, based on the experiment which proved so successful at Leeds in 1871. The object of the exhibition is to bring under the notice of the public generally, and particularly those who are interested in social, sanitary, and educational questions, the latest scientific appliances for improving the public health and promoting education.

## MEDICAL CHIT-CHAT.

There are some amusing passages in Dr. Druitt's new book on cheap wines. Speaking of Burgundy, he says:—"Of course, like all great artists, I am drawing from the live model. I write with a bottle before me, which I am sacrificing for my own inspiration and my reader's profit." All readers of Dr. Druitt's easily flowing and elegantly constructed periods will thank him for his consideration; and we should advise those authors who have lately been so cruelly handled for defects of style, to follow his example. If we look to the internal evidence afforded by this work, and if we class wines according to their power of lubricating the writing and inditing machinery of our author, we should certainly place the wines of the Bordeaux and Burgundy districts first. The chapters which deal with the properties of these wines were evidently written *con amore*, and are, consequently, the best in the book. Those which detail the tastings of less known varieties from Italy, Greece, Hungary, etc., have about them an air of "duty," and lack the smack of "love" which makes our author so entertaining.

Dr. Wardrop was in the habit for many years of giving advice to "poor people" at his house in Charles street, St. James's Square, and was induced to discontinue the practice from the following circumstances:—He had been called out one morning early to a patient in the neighboring square. On returning home he saw alighting from a coroneted carriage a somewhat shabby old man, whom he recognized as one of his gratuitous morning patients. He made a detour, and returning inquired of the footman the name of his master, whom he ascertained to be the Earl of ——. When his turn came the pauper patient was ushered into the consulting-room of the great surgeon. Wardrop, in his blunt and decisive style, addressed the impostor by his name. The surprise of the latter may be conceived. Wardrop, who kept notes of all his cases, ascertained that he had been defrauded of somewhat about twenty guineas. This sum he demanded under a threat of exposure of the culprit, and was successful in obtaining it. We have heard Wardrop relate this anecdote, and describe in his graphic manner, the miserable appearance that the old rogue presented. The circumstances detailed took so strong an effect upon Wardrop that he determined to discontinue a vicious system. Frauds of this description are so frequent since the establishment of proprietary special hospitals and dispensaries that surgeons in general practice, particularly in the metropolis, are robbed of a large portion of their income.—[*Med. Times and Gaz.*]

In the "struggle for existence," how does the pheasant, which, from nesting on the ground, is peculiarly exposed to four-footed or ground vermin, maintain herself and her eggs intact? Mr. W. B. Tegetmeier, in his work on "Pheasants for the Covert and the Aviary," suggests an answer. The peculiar specific odour of the bird is suppressed during incubation, not, however, as a voluntary act. This suppression, Mr. Tegetmeier ascribes to vicarious secretion—the odoriferous particles usually exhaled by the skin being, for such time as the bird is sitting, excreted into the intestinal canal, most probably into the cæcum or cloaca. For example, the excreta of the bird, when not sitting, have when first discharged no odour akin to the smell of the bird itself; whereas the excreta of a sitting hen have a most remarkable odour of the bird, but highly intensified. The explanation is, therefore, this—the suppression of the natural scent is essential to the bird's security during incubation.