THE CHEMICAL INCOMPATIBILITY OF ANTI-SEPTIC AGENTS.

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The question of the utility of antiseptic agents is one of exceeding interest, so much so that the medical press teems with papers on the subject, and one of the latest of these appeared in The British Medical Journal on April 28th, 1888, by Dr. Boxall. In July, 1867, I wrote to THE LANCET that appeared in the British Medical Journal on April 28th, 1888, I considered it likely to be valuable, as the carbolicised iodine was available for many purposes where iodine was inadmissible owing to its staining properties. I have used this combination ever since, and iodised phenol frequently for intra-uterine medication; and it is rather startling, after twenty years' experience and most excellent results, to be told by Dr. Boxall that the substances are incompatible and probably inert. Perchloride of mercury is not an elementary substance, but is usually obtained by the action of common salt on sulphate of red oxide of mercury. The union of carbolic acid and iodine forms a colourless salt, which is soluble in water, and which is, I believe, an active but perfectly safe antiseptic. Mr. E. Owen has employed it, and speaks favourably of it in his "Surgical Diseases of Children" as an antiseptic lotion in abscess connected with diseased vertebrae, and also in a more recent paper on paws abscess. Mr. Walsham has lately reported its use for washing out the peritoneal cavity. I have employed decolourised iodine repeatedly for washing out large parametric abscesses, always with good results; and I use it both for vaginal and intra-uterine douching in midwifery practice, in the following proportions: liq. iodi, 2 dr.; sol. acidi carbolici (1 in 20), 2 oz.; aquæ ferventis ad 20 oz. The iodine is added to the hot water and makes a strong mahogany-coloured solution. When the carbolic solution is added it speedily becomes as clear as dextrine is the most dangerous of chalcites, causes much dysentery, albuminuria, hematuria, salivation, &c. In my opinion the carbolic iodine solution is by far the best antiseptic value; but it is well to remember that the human body and a test tube are not the same thing. The late Hughes Bennett showed by laboratory experiments that carbolic dilatation of the liver, few pain sufferers would endorse this, nor do I admit that twenty years' experience counts for nothing as against any new theory of incompatibilities. My notion of incompatible substances is that there is a chemical unfitness on the part of either to unite except to form inert compounds. The mixture of carbolic acid with iodine does none of these things. While on this subject, I may add that I know no greasy preparation which is at the same time so efficacious and so harmless as this: iodoform, 1 dr.; add that I know no greasy preparation which is at the same time so efficacious and so harmless as this: iodoform, 1 dr.; vaseline, 1 oz. It may be a mixture of incompatibilities, but I have learnt to trust it in a manner which has given me much peace of mind and satisfaction. Whenever it is necessary to plug the vagina, it is only required, whilst the parts were thus occupied, that they will remain absolutely sweet for twenty-four hours. This is an experiment which does not require an expert.

CASE OF CHRONIC GASTRITIS WITH DILATATION.

TREATED BY INDUCING A FOULITCE RASH ON THE EPIGASTRUM: CURE.

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This case belongs to a class of cases which, from the difficulty of diagnosis and the obstinate resistance to most of, if not all, the ordinary methods of treatment, is a source of great anxiety and perplexity to the physician, for, in spite of all his best efforts and skill, the patient goes on from bad to worse, until, worn out by care and exhaustion and want of resistance, what was, perhaps, only caused by the friendly arrest of death. From the symptoms detailed below it may be surmised that the gastric dilatation was caused by the blocking of the pyloric orifice by the inflamed and swollen gastric mucous membrane, which in turn arose from injudicious feeding, imperfect mastication, and irregularity of his habits. The treatment employed in this case is by no means new, but it is still unknown, or only imperfectly known, to the great majority of the profession. No medicine was administered throughout the whole course of symptoms. Bread and water were the only articles of food. Bread, for example, was given, which caused strong epigastric and acidity, and the rising of fumes from the stomach having a very fetid odour, besides causing great pain in the epigastrium, and in forty-eight hours a rash began to develop presenting all the characters of miliaria; a day or two later it resembled eczema impetiginodes, and from its place a yellowish exudate could be seen. It is a very acid reaction, began to flow. In effect the applications remained the same throughout the whole course of treatment, though in the morning and evening the applications were renewed, whilst the parts were thoroughly cleansed each time, yet the discharge became thin and serous, and less and less offensive, until at last the rash dried up and disappeared, leaving the patient quite free from all trace of his former dyspepsia. It is evident that something other than a mere local dermatitis was effected by the action of the poultices, for without other applications save those to the epigastrum there frequently develops, as in this case, a general rash over everything, what is known as erythein or redness of the body produced by the friendly arrest of death. This fact is equivalent to acknowledging that it is a remedy to be used only occasionally with caution and under strict supervision. It is a little too potent for general use. Sänger has proved by experiments on animals that corrosive sublimate did not act on the liver, but few pain sufferers would endorse this, nor do I admit that twenty years' experience counts for nothing as against any new theory of incompatibilities. My notion of incompatible substances is that there is a chemical unfitness on the part of either to unite except to form inert compounds. The mixture of carbolic acid with iodine does none of these things. While on this subject, I may add that I know no greasy preparation which is at the same time so efficacious and so harmless as this: iodoform, 1 dr.; add that I know no greasy preparation which is at the same time so efficacious and so harmless as this: iodoform, 1 dr.; vaseline, 1 oz. It may be a mixture of incompatibilities, but I have learnt to trust it in a manner which has given me much peace of mind and satisfaction. Whenever it is necessary to plug the vagina, it is only required, whilst the parts were thus occupied, that they will remain absolutely sweet for twenty-four hours. This is an experiment which does not require an expert.

For the notes of this case I am partly indebted to my colleague, Dr. Hunter.