

IODINE AN ANTIDOTE TO STRYCHNINE.

MR. EDITOR,—In your issue of Aug. 20, 1868, appears a selected article with the above heading, by Dr. Fuller, of London, in which he says :

“Neither in Dr. Taylor’s work on Poisons, nor in any other work which I have had the opportunity of consulting, do I find the slightest reference to Iodine as an antidote to Strychnine.”

On page 121 of my little work on Chemistry,* published thirteen years ago, you will find a table of Poisons and their Antidotes, in which occurs this line :

“Strychnia....Dilute Tincture of Iodine.” More than a year before its publication I had noticed the reaction mentioned by Dr. Fuller, viz. : the precipitation of strychnia in prescriptions containing iodine ; and had also tested the matter practically in a case where medicinal doses of strychnia too rapidly administered resulted in spasms ; and these were speedily relieved by small doses of dilute tincture of iodine. Since then I have twice had occasion to use the antidote under somewhat similar circumstances ; and in each case the spasms were evidently relieved by the frequent administration of the remedy in small doses (v. to x. gtt. in syrup, repeated three or four times in as many hours). In cases of poisoning with strychnia, I presume it would be necessary to increase the dose, and repeat it oftener ; but I have no experience on that head.

W. S. BROWN, M.D.

Stoneham, Mass., Nov. 23, 1868.

Bibliographical Notices.

Retinitis Nyctalopica. By Prof. Dr. ARLT, of Vienna. From “Der Bericht ueber die Augenklinik.” Translated, with consent of the author, by J. F. Weightman, M.D., of Philadelphia. Phila. : Lindsay & Blakiston. 1868. pp. 23.

Under this title, Prof. Arlt treats of an affection of the retina, which he considers a distinct one, occurring but rarely, characterized by diminished acuteness of vision, and dazzling on exposure to bright daylight. The latter symptom is exactly the opposite of that found in night-blindness, though the cause of the trouble, viz., prolonged exposure to bright diffused or reflected light, is the same as that of some cases of the last-named disease.

Prof. Arlt has seen thirty-three cases ;

* Chemistry for Beginners. By Wm. Symington Brown, M.D. Sec. Edit. Boston : Crosby, Nichols & Co. 1855.

among these, ten presented slight haziness of the retina, extending from the papilla and somewhat obscuring its outline, while in the others slightly increased redness or paleness of the papilla was, at the most, all that could be observed. Both eyes were in every case affected very nearly alike, and the diminution of acuteness of vision was proportional over the whole field. Only males were affected, and of these, chiefly those whose occupation would naturally render them specially exposed to the cause.

The prognosis is favorable, but the course of the disease long. The treatment consisted mainly in secluding the patient from the light, and regulating the diet, with an occasional aperient. In most of the cases, also, leeches were applied behind the ears at first. A course of mercury is advised, but from the four cases, details of which are given, it has seemed to us that those who did not take this drug did fully as well as the others.

The distinction between this affection and others which might be confounded with it is briefly drawn.

The translator has followed the German idiom so closely in some instances as to make the meaning scarcely intelligible.

The printing is excellent.

Medical and Surgical Journal.

BOSTON : THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1868.

THE PROGRESS OF MEDICAL SCIENCE.

“AM I not becoming obsolete, and behind the times ?” is a question formerly applicable only to the old physician, whose practice had been worn into the ruts of routine, and whose brain had grown too hard with age to take new impressions. But the rapid progress of modern medical science makes it a pertinent inquiry for every graduate of ten years standing to ask himself, as he contemplates the great procession of yearly medical classes, following hard upon his heels, and jostling him out of the path, with better education, newer theories, and even fresh scientific facts.

The age is a progressive one, and medicine shares the change. While the German schools are drawing students, and the best students, from America, and absorbing and overshadowing Paris, they threaten to pro-