others, among whom may be mentioned Rindfleisch, Recklinghausen, Klebs, Orth and Doléris.

Pasteur, in 1880, was the first to cultivate the streptococcus from the organs of women dead of puerperal fever. Similar results were obtained by Fränkel, Bumm, Winter and many others, so that at present there can be no doubt that the streptococcus pyogenes stands in a causal relation to a very large proportion of the fatal cases of puerperal disease. Widal found streptococci in nearly every case in which he performed an autopsy, and also demonstrated that the most divergent forms of puerperal affection, for example, endometritis, peritonitis, pyæmia and even phlegmasia alba dolens, could be traced to streptococcus infection.

Streptococci are not the sole cause, however, for organisms that lead to wound-infection elsewhere can also give rise to puerperal wound-infection. Brieger was the first to show that the staphylococcus could cause fatal puerperal fever, and his statements were soon verified. They, however, rarely cause the more severe forms, but are often combined with streptococci.

Krönig¹ has recently demonstrated that gonococci may occasionally be the cause of some of the milder cases of puerperal disease.

Von Franque,² in a recent article, reports a case of moderate severity, in which he found a pure culture of the colon bacillus in the uterus, unaccompanied by any other organism. A pure culture from this case readily killed guinea-pigs and rabbits. As far as I know, this is the first and only reported case of puerperal infection due to this bacillus. It is not to be surprised at, however, when we consider the proximity of the rectum and the frequency with which the colon bacillus is found in purulent affections of the abdomen, especially appendicitis.

It is probable that other organisms may cause the trouble, either alone or in combination, notably the bacillus proteus.

In the case in question a sterile swab was introduced into the interior of the uterus and another into the upper vagina under aseptic precautions. Cultures of both were made on Löffler's blood-serum mixture, and showed a pure growth of a short bacillus. Agar plates were made from each of these tubes, and showed a pure culture of colonies resembling in their growth the colon bacillus. This bacillus, when cultivated on the various media, corresponded in every way to the bacillus coli communis, that is, grew on nutrient gelatine without liquefaction and with the formation of a few gas-bubbles; formed gas in sugar agar, acidified and coagulated litmus milk; showed a profuse, moist, yellowish growth on potato; was motile in hanging drop of bouillon culture; and gave the indol reaction in Dunham's solution.

A NOTE ON THE USE OF ICHTHYOL.¹

BY A. D. SINCLAIR, M.D.

I WISH to say a few words about the drug ichthyol, which has come to rather extensive use of late, especially in Germany, but not used as yet to any great extent in this country. Some observations, however, published from time to time in the journals, have

¹ Read before the Obstetrical Society of Boston, November 11, 1893.

¹ Krönig: Centralbl. f. Gyn., 1893, 157.

² Von Franque: Zeit. f. Geb. u. Gyn., 1893, xxv, 277.

given a favorable impression of its value in the treatment of various conditions of the system, local and constitutional.

Ichthyol is an exudation from strata of rocks in the Jura, which abound in fossil fishes. It is of a tarry consistency. Less than a dozen years ago this substance was brought to the notice of chemists in Hamburg, I think, who analyzed it. At all events, Professor Unna, the famous dermatologist of that city, was the first who brought it to the knowledge of the medical profession by the report of cases of certain cutaneous affections successfully treated by its use. This exposition led to further elaboration of the substance by the chemists, Cordes, Hermanin & Co., of Hamburg, who have made a variety of combinations of the original product with ammonium, sodium and zincum, each of which is supposed to possess — and some to my certain knowledge have — distinct influence therapeutically. Pills and capsules of the same are also made by them, and are beautiful specimens of pharmaceutical art. The liquid preparations of ichthyol exhale a strong sulphide-of-ammonium odor, which, however, soon passes off on exposure, and need not be, as some have written, prejudicial to its use as a drug to be used in one's consulting-room.

I shall now give in a few words my own experience of the use of ichthyol since I first had it brought to my notice in March, 1891, and will anticipate by stating that its most characteristic effects, when applied locally in certain affections of the pelvic viscera, are *anodyne and astringent*.

I have had many opportunities to test the value of ichthyol in congested states of the pelvic organs of women with various dilutions of the above-named preparations, but have arrived at a point where I think I find the best result from a fifty-per-cent. with glycerine. This strength of the drug has been used by me in numerous cases of recent and chronic congestions of the reproductive organs, as well as those of the vagina, urethra and rectum.

In prescribing ichthyol, the druggist will always dispense the sulpho-ichthyolate of ammonium, as this is the most known preparation. The combination with sodium I have not tested, but that with zinc is remarkably astringent, and its effects in certain conditions, to be arrived at by experience in the use of this medication, are a little surprising. I have not had a single bad effect in the use of preparations of ichthyol, although I have applied them many hundreds of times. I therefore, from my experience of their effects in certain conditions in the practice of minor gynecology, would recommend a trial to those who have never used them, and a more extended application by those who have already tried them.

I have in these short remarks confined myself to the use of ichthyol in congestive and chronic inflammatory states of the pelvic organs, but could say something favorable of it in the treatment of dyspepsia, chronic diarrhœa and erysipelas.

THE EFFECTS OF MEDICAL LEGISLATION. — At the last meeting of the State Board of Medical Examiners of the State of Washington, held in Seattle, there were twenty-two applicants for a license to practise, of whom twelve failed to pass the required examination and were rejected. The Board now requires a general average of 75 per cent. on all branches. — *Medical News*.