

tions, that in the action of albumen on metallic salts, *this principle unites directly with these compounds without producing any decomposition.* It forms compounds with them, which are insoluble in water, when these bodies are in certain proportions, but susceptible of solution when the albumen or the metallic salt is in excess. And these compounds he denominates *albuminates.* (*American Journal of Pharmacy*, vol. xii, p. 170, from the *Journal de Chimie Médicale.*)

We have reason to fear, from these results, that the value of albumen as a *chemical* antidote, will be somewhat impaired. Still its use should not by any means be omitted, but it should be administered as early as possible and in large quantities.

T. R. B.

70. *On the Conversion of Calomel into Corrosive Sublimate.* By M. MIAHLE.—A physician had prescribed to a child a few powders, containing in each five grains of the muriate of ammonia, five grains of sugar, and half a grain of calomel. After taking a few of these the child died, with all the symptoms of poisoning by corrosive sublimate; and the apothecary was charged with the death of the child, on the supposition that he had substituted corrosive sublimate for the calomel. Experiments were instituted to ascertain whether the calomel could have been decomposed by the ammoniacal salt; and it was satisfactorily proved by M. Peten-Koffer, that a portion at least was converted into corrosive sublimate. A celebrated French professor of chemistry, however, denied that such an action took place; and M. Miahle repeated with great care the experiments, and arrived at the following important conclusions.

1. The proto-chloride of mercury (calomel,) when mixed with muriate of ammonia, or the chlorides of sodium or potassium, and distilled water, is partly converted into the deuto-chloride of mercury (corrosive sublimate,) and partly into metallic mercury. This decomposition takes place at the temperature of the human body, and even at ordinary temperatures, in the course of a few instants. In order to be convinced of the truth of this, it is only necessary to have in the mouth for a few minutes a small quantity of calomel; a pretty intense mercurial taste is soon developed, due to the mutual reaction of the mercurial chloride, and the alkaline chlorides contained in the saliva.

2. It is to the conversion of calomel into corrosive sublimate and metallic mercury, when acted upon by the hydrochloric acid or hydrochlorates, or ammoniacal salts which exist in the digestive tube, that we must attribute the pathological phenomena of mercurial salivation, when calomel has been administered internally. What proves that such is really the case, is the fact, that when calomel does not purge, but is tolerated by the digestive organs, it excites an abnormal secretion of saliva and this on account of the larger quantity of sublimate which is formed.

3. As the quantity of sublimate formed within the body depends on the quantity of alkaline chlorides met with in the intestinal canal, those who habitually use large quantities of salt, all other things being equal, ought to be more easily salivated than others.

4. The antisymphilitic properties of calomel are probably due entirely to the corrosive sublimate and metallic mercury into which it is converted. Without doubt its anthelmintic virtues are owing to the same cause; the two substances into which it is converted acting as a poison on the intestinal worms.

5. What has been said of calomel is equally applicable to the proto-ioduret of mercury; it being, in the same circumstances, converted into the deuto-ioduret. —*Edinburg Med. and Surg. Journ.* July, 1840, from *Journal de Pharmacie*, February, 1840.

T. R. B.

71. *Case of Poisoning by Colchicum Seeds.* By Dr. NEUBRANDT.—A man, 52 years of age, took by mistake, on the evening of the 18th February, a decoction of the seeds of colchicum, made with a table spoonful of the seeds to a pound and a-half of water. During the night he vomited, and passed more than fifteen stools. He was seen by Dr. Neubrandt next morning, but was not then complaining much. The vomiting and purging were less frequent, and though he