in spite of all the remedies applied for the purpose, will not close; and when thought to be healed up will again open, yet without any detriment to the mother. The child, now eight months old, may likewise be exhibited as a pattern of health, strength, and beauty.

J. J. LOCHER, M.D. *Town-physician.*

Zurich, October 20th, 1817.

Cases of the Effects of Mercury on the Heart. By JOHN
ASTBURY, M. D.

[From the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal.]

MR. —, aged 55, of a strong muscular appearance, but with a weak stomach and bowels, consulted me on December 19th, 1814, on account of a cold œdematous swelling in the right leg and thigh, the consequence of a diseased lymphatic gland in the groin. Some mild mercurial ointment, combined with soft soap, and camphor, was directed to be rubbed upon the thigh of the affected side, and upon the diseased gland, morning and evening. On December 29th, his son came to me in the morning, and informed me, that his father was much weaker, and worse, than when I last saw him. On my visiting him, I found him raised up in bed, with his mouth open, gasping for breath, his breathing very laborious. He complained of great uneasiness and anxiety about the præcordia; he was in a profuse perspiration; there was a strong mercurial fetor in his breath; his pulse fluttering, feeble, and intermitting, so that it could not be counted. He got up to the night stool in my presence, and his strength was so much depressed, that it was with very great difficulty he could be got into bed again. He had a slight pain in his side, with slight cough, and trifling bloody expectoration; his tongue was white and moist. As the action of the heart was so feeble and irregular, and his strength so much depressed, I gave him wine very freely, with the best effects; I likewise directed a strong solution of magnes. sulph. to open the bowels copiously. The next morning I found his pulse more distinct, though still very intermitting. He had had three copious stools; his breathing was less laborious; the anxiety about the heart was diminished; his strength was improved; the perspiration was still very profuse; he had slept three hours, and was in every respect respect relieved. The wine and solution of magnes. sulph. were continued for several days. As the mercurial fetor in his

breath, and the effects of the mercury declined, the pulse became more regular and full, the perspiration greatly diminished, his strength improved, but the bloody expectoration and cough, with slight pain in his head, increased. The wine was therefore omitted; saline medicines, with small doses of nitre, and a blister to the side, were directed; the swelling in the leg and thigh, and in the diseased lymphatic gland, gradually subsided, and my patient recovered his usual health.

On the 1st of January 1815, I was consulted on a case, where the patient had been rubbing in mercury for a venereal complaint for some weeks. He stood in the street in a current of air, on December 31st, in thin shoes, and fine cotton stockings, for a considerable time, and was attacked in the evening, with great anxiety about the præcordia; alarming and sudden depression of strength; a numbness, and partial loss of motion in his hands and feet; great hurry of spirits; a profuse perspiration; his pulse was fluttering and undulating; his tongue was dry. This was the history of the complaint I received from my very ingenious and well informed friend, Dr. Northen of Newcastle, who attended him on the night of December 31st. I found him on the morning of January 1st in a profuse perspiration; his pulse full and strong, but very intermitting, about 60; his breathing tolerably free; he complained of an uneasy sensation in the region of the heart; his countenance was composed, his mind clear and collected; there was a partial loss of motion in his hands and feet; his strength was much depressed; he complained of great numbness in his hands and feet; his tongue was dry and brown in the middle, though he did not complain of any particular thirst. Some purgative medicines had been directed, which were continued, and some doses of sulph. lot. were ordered. In the night of January 4th a complete paralysis of the hands and feet came on, which, in the afternoon of the 5th, affected all his limbs, and extended to the heart, and he died in the night of January 5th.

Both these cases were evidently of the same nature as those described by Mr. Pearson, in his reports of cases in the Lock Hospital, under the name of the Mercurial Erethismus, arising from the poison of mercury affecting the heart.

It appears from these two cases, and from other cases recorded by Mr. Pearson, that, in some instances, mercury affects the heart with partial, and in other cases with complete paralysis, the same as the extremities, and frequently produces sudden death. Probably the energy and life which exist in the heart, may enable that organ to recover from a partial paralysis, (a crippled state of action,) in a more speedy manner than the

extremities do, where the circulation is more languid. In both these cases, the application of, (or exposure to cold air,) seemed to direct the action of the mercury to the heart, and should make us cautious how we expose patients when under the influence of mercury to cold air. In the first case, the patient went out every day into the air, and the cough, slight pain in the side, and trifling bloody expectoration, were evidently the effects of exposure to cold air; for had these symptoms arisen from the irritation of mercury, the cough, bloody expectoration, &c. would have subsided, as the effects of the mercury declined; on the contrary, the cough, bloody expectoration, and slight pain in the side, increased, as the effects of the mercury were diminished.

I observe Mr. Pearson recommends a generous diet, and free exposure to cool dry air, and the patient to sit with his windows open in cool weather in these cases. These were the first cases I ever met with of the same nature, and as both were attended with profuse perspiration, (and if there had been no profuse perspiration,) I should think it a dangerous experiment, with these two examples before us, to expose patients under similar circumstances to cold air. If I were to meet with another similar case, I should treat it with wine, as the best cordial calculated to restore the regular action of the heart, and give sufficient doses of the solution of magnes. sulph. to diminish the effects of the mercury in the habit, and keep the patient quiet in a temperate, but not cold air. There was no ptyalism in either case. I was not sure, whether the profuse perspiration was not an effect of nature to relieve the constitution from the effects of the poison; but I did not observe any salutary effects from it in either case; neither was the cough or bloody expectoration at all relieved by it.

Barlston, April 14th, 1818.

Effects of Venesection in certain forms of Dropsy. By
ADAM HUNTER, M. D. Fellow of the Royal College of
Surgeons, Edinburgh.

[From the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal.]

C O. æt. 42, married.—About the beginning of June, I was requested to see this patient, who, having accidentally received a blow on an anasarctous leg, was alarmed, from the appearances it had assumed, it would prove of serious conse-