16th.—The tumour has entirely disappeared; a slight discharge of serum with a little matter from the wound to-day. I have ordered the part to be poulticed with linseed, which I should have stated was used for a few days before its evacuation. In a few days the wound healed up and all went on favourably, only a slight induration being left, which disappeared from a week to ten days after the opening of the tumour.

Since I began to direct my attention to the treatment of such cases, I have used the iodine both internally and externally, and in no one instance have I been able to trace any bad effects from its use—namely, vertigo, or the absorption of healthy glands, &c.

Hutton Henry, Dec. 1847.

CASE OF SPONTANEOUS EVOLUTION.

By VERTUE EDWARDS, Esq.,

SURGEON TO THE TOWER HAMLETS DISPENSARY.

ONE or two reports of spontaneous evolution, occurring in cases of midwifery where the arm has presented, having appeared in the pages of *THE LANCET*, I am induced to forward to you an account, in brief, of a case of the kind which some time ago came under my notice.

About ten o'clock, on the morning of the 26th April, 1847, I was summoned to Mrs. R——, pregnant for the third time, who, I was informed, had been in labour many hours. Upon examination the os uteri was found fully dilated, and the arm of a child was protruding through the vulva. As the membranes had been but recently ruptured I proceeded at once to turn the child; but so exceedingly frequent and violent did the contractions of the uterus become, shortly after the introduction of the hand, that although enabled to reach the feet, I found it impossible to bring them down. Failing to accomplish my object, I requested my friend Mr. Kent, who favoured me with his advice and assistance throughout the case, to make an attempt to alter the position of the child; but after considerable perseverance he also was compelled to withdraw his hand, without being able to complete the task.

As some time had now elapsed, and it was becoming important that the uterus should be relieved of its contents, we determined, without further delay, upon perforating and eviscerating the chest. While preparations were in progress for the performance of this operation, the patient suddenly passed a large quantity of fæces, and immediately the arm of the child disappeared, and the breech, a minute afterwards, was found occupying its place. Two or three strong uterine contractions speedily expelled a female child, of an average size, but which had evidently been dead some hours. Hæmorrhage to a considerable extent followed the expulsion of the placenta, which, being repeated a few hours afterwards, rendered the period of convalescence somewhat extended; but eventually our patient became perfectly well.

The change from an arm to a breech presentation, occurring spontaneously, is exceedingly rare, and perhaps ought to be; for assuredly an accoucheur would scarcely be justified in leaving a case of arm presentation, where it was possible to turn, to a chance so exceedingly remote as that of a "spontaneous evolution." As, however, the possibility of such an event is doubted by many, I conceive it to be incumbent upon us to place all such cases as do really occur upon record, and I know of no better means of securing for them the requisite publicity and permanency than those which are afforded by the pages of *THE LANCET*.

January, 1848.

ON THE EFFICACY OF ACETATE OF LEAD IN INTESTINAL DISEASE.

By J. C. BA DELEY, M.D., Chelmsford.

WELL aware that the pages of *THE LANCET* are ever open to the promulgation of useful information, and that practical science must ever take precedence of theoretical conjecture, I make no apology for contributing the following case, illustrating, as it does, the efficacy of the acetate of lead in intestinal disease.

The subject was a wheelwright in this town, who has long been affected with symptoms indicating a morbid action, if not structural disease, of the intestinal canal. He has on several occasions been in considerable danger from obstinate obstruction; and when I was recently called in I found him suffering from a relapse of this nature, attended with excruciating pain and spasm, vomiting, hiccough, and inordinate distention of the abdomen, though unattended by pain

on pressure, or other well-known characteristics of inflammation. As the leading indication was to procure a free evacuation, I concurred with Mr. Lovell, who was in attendance on the patient, in the necessity of the purgatives best adapted to this end; and pills, composed of calomel, croton oil, and colocynth, together with senna and jalap, aided by turpentine injections, soon produced the desired effect, and I took my leave. I was very soon, however, summoned again, in consequence of the distressing pain, tormina, and distention of the intestines, and an enormous accumulation of flatus, with gurgillement, and cramp. Morphia and other sedatives were resorted to; injections of oil of turpentine and of the confection of rue, which are often very efficacious in flatulence, were thrown up. The abdomen was rubbed with stimulants and opiate liniments, and then covered with a large galbanum and opium plaster. He was enjoined to take but small quantities of food, avoiding fluids, and castor oil was prescribed, with the intention of procuring daily relief of the bowels. Calomel and opium were also given, in addition to other remedies which we considered calculated to remove the symptoms that presented. Vomiting, however, supervened after everything that was taken. The pain was only relieved, *pro tempore*, by the opiates. Hiccough recurred, both when asleep and awake, and the pains and distention were most distressing and obstinate; the intestines lay in large coils across the abdomen; and the noise occasioned by the incarceration of wind was so loud as to be audible down stairs. The tongue was coated, and the countenance unfavourable, though the pulse remained good. The case now presented so unpromising an aspect that his friends were summoned to take, in all probability, their last leave. The bowels acted only occasionally; and unsatisfactorily, and the spasms were as violent as ever. Very little food of any kind was taken—even the little which was swallowed, more from the persuasion of his relatives than his own inclination, returned; his appetite was nearly or quite gone, and his debility increased.

Feeling convinced in my own mind that, under the absence of inflammation, this distention proceeded from want of tone in the muscular fibres of the intestinal canal, and their consequent failure of power to contract and expel the increased generation of air, I ordered large doses of alum, persisting, at the same time, in the daily injection of turpentine, which appeared to give more relief than any other remedy which was applied. Again disappointed, however, in the result, and remembering the strong advocacy by Dr. Graves, of Dublin, of the acetate of lead in tympanitis, I determined to give it a fair trial, though not without considerable apprehension of its constipating effects. I prescribed, nevertheless, three grains of the superacetate of lead, with the sixth of a grain of acetate of morphia, in a pill, every four hours, and a continuance of the turpentine enema every evening. The excellent effects of this combination soon began to manifest themselves, by the comparative suppleness of the abdomen, the expulsion of large quantities of air, the subsidence of the cramps, spasms, and pain, and even by copious dejections. The hiccough gradually declined, the appetite began to return, and convalescence was at once established. The pills were reduced to only two in the twenty-four hours, and finally to one; and the patient is now only suffering from the debility and emaciation consequent on the severity and protraction of the attack. The validity of the theory of this practice is therefore, I think, sufficiently proved to entitle it to publication; and as the prominent feature of the disease is by no means uncommon, I shall be happy to find that my calling the attention of the profession to the value of the acetate of lead has been productive of similar success in the hands of other practitioners. About two years ago I was equally successful with the sulphate of zinc and opium, in the case of a lady who had been severely afflicted with enteritis, and consequent distention of the abdomen; but the inflammatory symptoms in that case required of course a different plan of treatment, and copious depletion, ere it could be resorted to. The case having been already published, I shall not enlarge upon it on this occasion. I shall only, in conclusion, observe, that I believe abdominal distention from flatulence, and also constipation, to be dependent very frequently on want of tone and muscular power in the canal, and that as the repetition of drastic purgatives is often productive of this unpleasant result, relief may often be obtained from metallic tonics and medicines of an astringent nature. The efficacy of the acetate of lead in Asiatic cholera, as stated in your review, last week, of Dr. Parkes's work, is unquestionably corroborative of the value of this medicine in intestinal affections.

Chelmsford, January, 1848.