PREMATURE LABOUR ARTIFICIALLY PRODUCED.

WE have received a communication from Mr. E. A. Cory, containing the following case of the artificial production of premature labour:—

Mrs. H., of short stature, and aged about 30, had twice undergone the operation of embryotomy. Mr. Cory attended her, for the first time, about three years since, when the same operation was again deemed necessary, and performed. The pelvic deformity was of the reniform character, the space between the sacro-vertebral angle and symphysis pubis being about two inches and three-fourths. It was consequently determined, should the recurrence of pregnancy render it necessary, that the premature induction of parturition at the seventh month of utero-gestation should be had recourse to. She had again become pregnant, and it was calculated that she had arrived at the 7th month of her pregnancy about Thursday, the 14th of September last. The ergot of rye was now given, and at six P.M., soon after the administration of the second dose, the uterine energy became slightly excited, and it was interesting as well as satisfactory to observe its gradual increase soon after the repetition of each dose of the medicine. On the next day (Friday), at one P.M., the parturient pains were tolerably active, but at considerable intervals. A vaginal examination was instituted, and the membranes were felt pressing against the undilated os uteri. Saturday, at eleven A.M.—The pains had gradually diminished in force and frequency, and she had experienced no pain from yesterday, at four o'clock P.M., to the present time, and was, to use her own expression, "quite well again." The institution of another vaginal examination demonstrated that the os uteri had not in the least degree increased in dilatation, and that the pressure of the membranes, which had been previously experienced, had now entirely subsided. Instead of repeating the *secale cornutum*, lest it might destroy the infant, it was thought most prudent to rupture the membranes, the distension of which had now completely subsided. She was again visited on Sunday, at a little after one P.M. She remained in a similar condition, and there had been no accession of the pains of parturition. On Monday she had not yet experienced any pain, and the bowels being in a constipated state, Mr. C. prescribed an aloetic purgative, with a carminative addition, which had the effect of thoroughly evacuating the bowels, and exciting the uterus to action; so that early on Tuesday morning, the pains of labour commenced with con-

siderable activity, and continued with but slight intermission until six o'clock in the evening, when she was delivered of a living infant of healthy appearance. The foetal head occupied several hours in its passage through the contracted pelvis, and after expulsion, presented on its lateral portion an evident indentation, and was also considerably flattened. The whole process terminated as in a common accouchement. The placenta was expelled with but little assistance, about half-an-hour after the birth of the infant, which was restored in ten minutes by immersion in the warm-bath and by artificial respiration. The child remains at the present time (October 16th) healthy and vigorous, takes the breast freely, and there is every probability that it will continue to live. The patient has not suffered the least pain or inconvenience since her delivery; in short, her recovery was most rapid.

SYDENHAM COLLEGE.

EXPERIMENTS ON THE NERVOUS SYSTEM IN THE TURTLE.

By MARSHALL HALL, M.D., F.R.S.

ON Thursday, the 13th instant, Dr. Marshall Hall showed to his pupils some experiments upon the nervous system in the turtle. He first placard before the pupils a diagram, illustrative of the action of the *vis nervosa*, as described by Haller, and, subsequently, by Professor Müller. According to these celebrated physiologists, the *vis nervosa* acts *only in the direction of the fibres of nerves going to muscles*.

Dr. Hall's first experiment demonstrated the error of this opinion. The head of the turtle being cut off, to remove the influence of sensation and volition, the spinal marrow was laid bare in the dorsal region, and stimulated by galvanism. The anterior as well as the posterior extremities moved. The motor power had, therefore, acted in an *arrière* direction.

Dr. Hall then proceeded to another experiment. A spinal intercostal nerve was laid bare, and exposed to the influence of the galvanic pile. Again, the anterior and the posterior extremities moved. In this experiment the motor power had taken an *incident* direction into the spinal marrow, and had, afterwards pursued a *retrograde*, a *direct*, and *reflex* course to the muscles of the extremities; facts equally new and at variance with the views of Haller, and the laws proposed by Prof. Müller.

Dr. Hall then irritated the *cutaneous* surfaces. Similar movements were produced.

This series of facts demonstrated that the *vis nervosa* of Haller is identical with the power which acts when, after decapitation, one anterior or posterior limb of an animal

is stimulated and the others move,—a decided step in our knowledge of these motor powers.

Dr. Hall then showed, in a short and familiar lecture, how the motor principles evolved in these experiments must be applied to the explanation of the action of the orifices and sphincters of the animal frame, of the functions of ingestion and egestion, and especially of respiration; and to the pathology of the *class of convulsive diseases*.

These experiments and observations were made at this time, solely on account of the possession of a turtle,—an opportunity which might not be enjoyed at the moment when Dr. Hall proposes to enter fully into the subject of the diseases of the nervous system.

We have received these brief notes from a spectator, who expresses a hope that we will publish a full account of Dr. Marshall Hall's useful labours on this interesting subject.—Ed. L.

CHOLERA MORBUS OF NAPLES.

THE following observations by M. Thibault, on the cholera morbus, as it appeared at Naples, will be found to contain several facts of the very highest interest. These remarks were communicated at a late meeting of the Royal Academy of Medicine.

Every one is acquainted with the position of Naples, a city so remarkable for the beauty of its site and the purity of its climate. It is built in the form of an amphitheatre, on one side of the Gulph, the entrance to which is closed by the island of Capri, while the back ground of the prospect is occupied by Mount Vesuvius. Naples is divided into the upper and lower city; it was in the latter that the cholera commenced, and raged with the greatest violence, almost to the end of the epidemic. This lower city is excessively filthy and ill-built, on land newly recovered from the sea, and the population, being poor, is ill-clothed, ill-fed, and crowded into low and badly ventilated habitations. It was on the 29th of November, when M. Thibault arrived; the mortality had then been decreasing since the 24th, at which period the disease had obtained its *maximum*, and was cutting off about 220 persons per diem.

It is unnecessary for us to follow the author through his description of the symptoms and march of the Asiatic cholera; suffice it to say, that these were precisely the same as those which we have witnessed in this country, or in France; the same premonitory diarrhoea for a few days; the same vomiting and purging of a rice-coloured fluid, with cramps; the same obstruction

of the circulation; in a few cases reaction and recovery; but in most death. The means employed to bring about reaction were those commonly employed in France. Ipecacuanha was a very favourite remedy, and almost every body was provided with doses of this medicine, to be taken the moment they felt any unpleasant symptoms. Up to the departure of the author from Naples the disease seemed to have spared the localities, in which intermittent and pernicious fevers (*cattiva aria*) habitually reign. The examination of dead bodies was not permitted before the 24th; but since that time M. Thibault, in conjunction with Professor Ramoglia, examined about 150 bodies of persons, all cut off within the fourth or fifth days of the disease. It is unnecessary to follow our author through the minute account which he gives of the post-mortem appearances observed; they were—1. Capillary injection, varying in degree, of the mucous membrane of the intestinal canal. 2. Development of the mucous follicles. 3. A great quantity of thick and viscid mucus lining the digestive canal. 4. Large numbers of worms, particularly of the tricocephalus, in the intestines. 5. Rice-coloured fluid in the stomach and bowels. 6. Vacuity and contraction of the bladder. 7. Repletion of the gall-bladder, with dark thick bile. 8. Distension of both sides of the heart with dark, thick blood; and little difference between arterial and venous blood in appearance.

From the above condensed account it is clear that the post-mortem appearances of the cholera at Naples do not differ from those observed in other countries. The only points which seem peculiar, and worthy of notice, are the presence of a rare species of worm, and of a vast quantity of thick and viscid mucus in the intestinal canal. The discovery of this fact by the young Professor Ramoglia, was at first thought to explain the existence of cholera, for it had been ascertained, beyond doubt, that the appearance of this worm (which is a very rare one) did not precede that of cholera. On mature reflection, however, the Neapolitan physicians determined to extend their inquiries to persons not dying of cholera, and by this sage precaution they have thrown very considerable light upon the nature of that disease. Thus, for example, the presence of the tricocephalus worm was determined in 80 non-choleric bodies (without exception) examined between the 10th of December and the 1st of February. They were generally in less quantity than in the bodies of choleric patients, but occupied the same places, and were exactly similar. But this phenomenon was not the only one common to choleric and non-choleric individuals. M. Thibault also found, in the bodies of persons dying of other diseases than the cholera, the thick, viscid mucus