me very often during the past twenty-five years) that when cases of infection appear, the endemic can be extinguished in a few days by the exclusion of the midwives and physicians engaged in the examinations without any other change in the maternity ward, the instruments, beds, &c. The same ward, the same room, the same bed, the same atmosphere—merely the entire cessation of examinations, with the exception of those absolutely necessary, made by a non-infected midwife under strict supervision. How can the striking result of such an experiment—which can but be made in very large institutions—be explained otherwise than on the theory that the examination of the parturient women, especially that with the finger, almost always produces the infection, that the virus is a fixed one, that the introitus vulvæ and cervical canal are the sites of infection, but that the atmosphere surrounding the puerperal women plays only a very subordinate part.” The experience of the Rotunda is in the same direction.

(*To be continued*).

ART. XIX.—*Arsenic in the Early Stages of Enteric Fever.* By FREDERICK KIRKPATRICK, M.B., Univ. Dubl.; ex-President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

ENTERIC fever having of late prevailed in Dublin, some valuable lives having been lost, and several patients having been left in broken health after a tedious recovery, it seems an appropriate time to bring the subject of this disease before the profession.

It is by no means my object to direct attention to the general treatment of enteric fever, but altogether to that which should be adopted at the very first moment we are called upon to treat that disease.

The German, the French, the American, and all our British authors, set forth in their chapters on treatment that there is no specific antidote, no possibility of destroying the typhoid poison, preventing its spread or arresting its progress. In his great work, published in 1873, Murchison says there is no specific for enteric fever, any more than for typhus; and he again remarks:—“If we can keep the patient alive a certain time the disorder will pass away.” Hence the young physician learns from an imposing array of authorities that his early treatment should be one of expectancy. In consequence the time for action is lost; the depressed condition of the patient’s nervous system, together with the deteriorated state

of the blood resulting from the operation of drain poison or other malarious influence, is not promptly encountered, and the inflammation of the intestinal glands, which there is the strongest reason to believe is set up at a very early period of the disease, is allowed to proceed and go on to produce ulceration and its dangerous consequences, and at best the tedious convalescence which so often supervenes.

Through the medium of this Journal I ask—Is there a well-grounded hope, is there any practical expectation that in the administration of small doses of arsenic, given at frequent and regular intervals all through the twenty-four hours, an improvement may be looked for, both in the deteriorated blood and the nervous system? That the inflammation of the intestinal glands may be promptly arrested, and moreover the distaste for all nourishment and the general derangement of the entire digestive system be favourably influenced?

In the year 1872, when Dr. Alfred Hudson was President of the College of Physicians, and I was myself President of the College of Surgeons, we were in attendance on an anxious case of enteric fever, when I thus addressed him—"Now, Dr. Hudson, we have absolutely no confidence in any of our remedies to arrest this fever. Do you not think that in arsenic we might find a remedy which we might prescribe with some confidence? We have every reason to think that inflammation is already being set up in the lining membrane of this patient's intestines;" and I quoted the first and last verses of one of Sir Alfred Power's clever sanitary rhymes:—

"There is a skin within and a skin without,
A lining skin and a covering skin;
But the skin within is the skin without,
Just doubled inwards and carried throughout.

* * *

Good people all, take care of your skin,
Both that without and that within.
To the first give plenty of water and soap,
To the last nothing stronger than water, we hope."

Dr. Hudson replied—"Dr. Kirkpatrick, do not imagine that your proposal is original. When I had the hospital in Navan the same thought struck me upon reading the chapter on the therapeutical uses of arsenic in a work by Dr. James Begbie, Physician to the Queen, in Scotland. I treated four cases with satisfactory results, and fully intended to give a full trial to the treatment of typhoid fever by small doses of arsenic in its early stage, when a

report was spread that I was using poison with my patients, and I was obliged to cease its use."

From that time up to the termination of his successful career, Dr. Hudson was one of the physicians most frequently employed in the treatment of enteric fever, and on inquiry amongst the chief pharmaceutical establishments in the city I was informed that arsenic was prescribed by him more frequently than by the other physicians.

I have myself had a very long experience in the use of arsenic; at first during a residence of five years at Steevens' Hospital, commencing in the year 1833; then for more than thirty years as surgeon to the North Dublin Union. In using this medicine for long periods in the numerous cases of lupus, chronic dysentery, scrofulous and skin affections that presented themselves, I found that such improvement in the condition of the patients, in their looks and general health, attended its curative effects on their local ailments that I was led to regard it as the most generally useful of all medicines.

In conclusion, I am anxious to record a case as the most remarkable one I have ever met with or read of as to the taking of arsenic. Some years ago I was called to visit a lady in the Co. Kildare, the wife of an aged clergyman, the late Rev. Dr. Warburton. In our first interview he asked my opinion as to the value of arsenic. On my commending it, he informed me that he had been in the constant habit of taking it for forty-six years. At first it had been prescribed by Sir Philip Crampton for a bad skin affection, but as improvement did not take place he was advised to go to London, where he consulted Dr. Hunt, that great authority upon diseases of the skin, who cured him, and gave him full instructions as to the use of the medicine and the time he should continue it. After some months he got a rheumatic attack, and instead of seeking advice he sent for a fresh supply of arsenic, which cured his pains. He told me that he had never ceased to take the medicine in three drop doses of the solution from that time; taking it for a month at a time, and then leaving an interval of a fortnight. He said he felt his energy and strength to fail if he left it off for even a short time. I have had a letter from his son authenticating his father's statement, and have also seen the apothecary who furnished the frequent supplies of Fowler's solution, two fluid ounces at a time. The letter from the son stated that his father died at the age of ninety-three years, and continued to take his drops up to the last few days of his life.