ON DEATH FROM RUPTURE OF THE CLITORIS.

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CATHERINE K —, aged thirty-eight, the mother of several children, the youngest five months old, has been addicted to drinking to excess occasionally, since the death, by burning, of two of her children, six years ago.

On the 13th instant, having been in a state of intoxication for three days, in the course of which she had, as on previous occasions, been furious with anger, and very abusive in her language towards her husband, he, provoked beyond endurance, kicked her underneath, as she was in a stooping posture. Blood flowed profusely from the private parts.

She was kept raised up by her attendants, until she was visited by myself and a medical friend, about three quarters of an hour after the injury had been inflicted. She had then lost from three to four pounds of blood, and was extremely faint. She was forthwith laid on the bed, and notwithstanding brandy was given, in a few minutes she expired.

Examination, thirty-eight hours after death, showed the cavities of the heart and the veins of the chest and belly devoid of blood. The membranes of the brain were highly vascular, and there were several spots of extravasated blood on the left hemisphere. The right lung was adherent, in part, to the costal pleura, and the liver attached to the diaphragm, from former inflammation. There was no sign of injury or disease within the pelvis; the uterus was small, and its internal surface covered with mucus. Not the slightest sign existed of hæmorrhage from that part; nor was there any clot in the vagina. The rectum was healthy. There were no hæmorrhoids. On inspecting the vulva, a wound was seen just within the vagina, on the left side, extending from the pubis along the ramus of that bone, to the extent of an inch; in depth, it was about three-quarters of an inch. The pubis and left ischium being removed, with the soft parts attached, the pudic artery was carefully traced to its ultimate divisions, but neither a fine probe, nor inflation, nor yet injection of fluid, discovered any rupture of that vessel opening into the wound. The left crus clitoridis was crushed throughout its length, so as to exhibit its cavernous structure. From that tissue alone, then, could the fatal rush of blood have proceeded.

The case was the subject of a coroner's inquest. Circumstances showed the absence of intention to inflict any very grievous bodily harm. The verdict given was "Homicide by misadventure."

Crescent, Birmingham, Oct. 1846.

REVIEWS.

Thoughts on Animalcules; or, a Glimpse of the Invisible World Revealed by the Microscope. By Gideon Algernon Mantell, LL.D., F.R.S. London: Murray, 1846. pp. 144. With Plates.

It must be confessed that there is some *little* of affectation in the title of this pretty work, but the subject is poetical, and calculated to awaken the inspirations of the dullest man, if he have aught of soul in his composition, and so we pass on to its pages, without caring to dispute upon the correctness of the christening which the author has pleased to give to his production. Of the size of the book, it is difficult to impart a clear idea, without a lexicon at hand, whereby to explore the extraordinary designations which publishers take delight in bestowing on their volumes. In length it may be a "post-octavo," but in breadth it is something more; with a moderate magnifying glass, it would be "revealed" a "quarto;" but this would be found an illusion of our sense, when the microscope was removed. We have it! It is a "hand-book," the last dandyism in the nomenclature of literature; but a hand-book worthy of a place upon the drawing-room table. By-the-by, that stupid Teutonism "hand-book,"—how could a "doer into English" blunder upon so miserable, so wretched, a translation? One only explanation suggests itself, namely, that he was so exhausted of his English and his common sense, at the end of his task, that nothing remained to him of his mother-tongue, save this awkward compound.

But we return to our author, whom this "counterblast" against a silly word in no wise concerns: "The object of this

volume," says Dr. Mantell, "is to present a familiar exposition of the nature and habits of some of the invisible beings which people our lakes and streams, in the hope, that by placing the most interesting phenomena in a striking point of view, and describing them in language divested, as much as possible, of scientific terms, the subject may be rendered attractive to the general reader, and some intelligent and inquiring minds be led to the cultivation of a branch of natural knowledge preëminently calculated to impart just and comprehensive views of the grandeur and harmony of the creation, and of the infinite wisdom and beneficence of its Divine Author; and which, in every condition and circumstance of life, will prove a never-failing source of pleasure and instruction." Thus we perceive that our author aims his discourse at the general, more than at the medical reader. But there are one or two considerations which render it, in reality, a medical subject. In the first place, natural history finds its most assiduous cultivators among medical men; secondly, the matter appertains to an important branch of medical study, physiology; thirdly, it behoves that the medical philosopher should not be found deficient in the knowledge of a subject upon which his opinion may be asked by an investigator of Nature's works; and, lastly,—and we pen it with pride,—the microscope, "that noblest instrument of natural philosophy," as Dr. Mantell calls it, is, in reality, a medical machine.

It is not, however, sufficient to be seated before a microscope, albeit properly adjusted, and in excellent order; we must know how to observe, and what to look for. This fact is placed cleverly and appositely before us in a quotation made by the author from Captain Basil Hall:—

"I have known many observant and quick-sighted men fail to perceive a double star in the heavens, while to others more practised, though using the same telescope, both objects were clearly defined. The secret often lies in knowing exactly what to look for, and thence learning how to adjust, not merely the focus of the eye, but what may be termed the focus of the judgment, so as to be able to pitch the understanding into such a key, that the information may be understood when it comes. I remember being present once at the Geological Society, when a bottle was produced, which was said to contain certain zoophytes. It was handed round, in the first instance, among the initiated on the foremost benches, who commented freely with one another on the forms of the animals in the fluid; but when it came to our hands we could discover nothing in the bottle but the most limpid fluid, without any trace, so far as our optics could make out, of animals, dead or alive—the whole appearing absolutely transparent. The surprise of the ignorant at seeing nothing was only equal to that of the learned, who saw so much to admire, nor was it until we were specifically instructed what we were to look for, and the shape, size, and general aspect of the zoophytes pointed out, that our understandings began to coöperate with our eyesight in peopling the fluid, which, up to that moment, had seemed perfectly uninhabited. The wonder, then, was, how we could possibly have omitted seeing objects now so palpable."

The animalcules treated of in this little volume are such as are found existing in a drop or two of water, containing a small twig, to which are attached a few delicate flakes, apparently of slime or jelly; and in this pigmy space are observed hydræ, monads, vorticellæ, and rotifera, to each of which a chapter is devoted. The chapters are illustrated with twelve very prettily executed drawings in lithotint, in which the species composing the above-named genera are displayed. Plate 1 is devoted to the three species of hydra, namely, vulgaris, viridis, and fusca; plate 2 contains the genera, vibrio, gonium, monas, volvox, and stentor; plate 3, carchesium and vorticella; plate 4, limnias ceratophylla; plate 5, melicerta ringens in its young and adult forms; plates 6 and 7, floscularia ornata; plate 8, floscularia proboscidea; plates 9 and 10, stephanoceros Ehrenbergii; plate 11, the development of stephanoceros; and plate 12, the genera, brachionus and rotifer.

The description of the animalcules in a work of this nature is naturally slight; but enough is said to give the reader, with