such an expression, "sedative- tonic"—like the pharmaceutical oxide and salts of silver and bismuth. I have employed it pretty extensively in the treatment of the class of cases described in the preceding paper, chronic intestinal eruptions, and occasionally with the most marked good effect in them, in instances that had resisted all other forms of treatment. It is often useful also in common cases of irritable dyspepsia, gastrodynia, &c. In my own practice, and in that of others, I have seen the above preparations of cerium succeed in at once allaying irritable and obstinate vomiting after all other means had failed. Sometimes I have observed it fail, like all other remedies, in giving relief in the sickness and vomiting of pregnancy ; but far more frequently I have found its employment accompanied by direct beneficial effects ; and I have now repeatedly had occasion to see it both immediately and perfectly successful in some cases where the usual succession of medicines—prussic acid, naphtha, opium, bismuth, ice, &c., had all been previously and perseveringly tried in vain.—(April, 1855.)

PUERPERAL FEVER.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

I HAVE been much interested of late by communications made to the Journal on puerperal fever, and will give you a few more facts on the same disease as I have seen it in the town of Pomfret, a healthy, hilly, agricultural district in Eastern Connecticut.

Between 1820 and 1840, this disease was much more frequent than it has been for the last ten or twelve years ; and with one exception only in thirty-five years it has always been confined to single cases, without any disposition to spread or extend, either by contagion or as an epidemic. But in the last week of December, 1842, it attacked four women in the following order :—

- 1st. Mrs. Adams, confined December 23d, died December 27th.
- 2d. Mrs. Aldrich, " " 27th, recovered.
- 3d. Mrs. Hubbard, " " 29th, died January 2d.
- 4th. Mrs. Howland, " " 30th, died January 12th.

They were all wives of farmers residing in different parts of the town, and previous to confinement were all in good health. They were all from 30 to 40 years old, and all had borne children previously. Their labors were perfectly natural, and they remained comfortable from 24 to 36 hours after delivery, and then were seized with that *horrid chill* which usually is the first indication of what may be expected to follow.

As respects the question of contagion, or whether the disease was conveyed from one patient to another, I must leave the reader to draw his own conclusions. Suffice it to say, I avoided obstetrical practice for a few weeks, and when it was resumed had no more of the disease.

The nurse of Mrs. Adams (where the fever commenced) was attacked in a day or two after her death with erysipelas of the head and face, so severely as to be disfigured considerably, yet finally recovered. In the other families nothing of the kind took place.

HIRAM HOLT, M.D.

Pomfret, Conn., June 8th, 1855.

ON THE OPHTHALMOSCOPE.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

DR. J. H. DIX, of Boston, presented to the Suffolk District Medical Society, at its last meeting, the ophthalmoscope of Helmholtz, as improved by Coccius, and explained the method of using it for the exploration of the textures of the globe of the eye posterior to the iris. He spoke of it as an instrument destined perhaps hereafter to throw some light upon the pathology of these textures. He considers it to be an instrument capable of great harm when injudiciously used. Pain may be induced in an eye, the vision of which is wholly extinct, by exposure to it for four or five minutes, a longer period than which should never be occupied in one examination. The greatest, and probably the only practical advantage at present attainable by the instrument, is the sparing of the patient a useless and harassing treatment in some cases of amaurosis of which the ophthalmoscope may demonstrate the cause to be irremediable organic change of texture of the retina. In reply to a question by Dr. Durkee, Dr. Dix said that for a full examination of the internal texture of the eye it is necessary to dilate the pupil previously, those cases only excepted in which the crystalline is wanting.

ON THE INDICATIONS OF TRACHEOTOMY DERIVED FROM THE PRESENCE OF FOREIGN BODIES IN THE AIR-TUBES.

BY M. CHASSAIGNAC.

TRACHEOTOMY is indicated whenever there is imminent danger of suffocation, produced by a material obstacle to the passage of air through the trachea.

Two classes of causes may give rise to this result: on the one hand, foreign bodies; on the other, a numerous series of affections which necessitate the establishment of an artificial channel for the introduction of air into the lungs.

First of all, I shall say a word as to the suitable moment for the performance of the operation. First, in cases in which there is absolute certainty of the existence of a foreign body in the trachea, the rule is to operate instantly, if the other means we possess of producing the exhalation of such a body have proved inefficient;