viously in good health, and had also an easy and natural labour. It was her fourth confinement, and she appeared to be doing well until Monday evening, when she was seized with shiverings. I was called early on Tuesday morning, and found her complaining of severe pain over the whole abdomen, and there was great tenderness on pressure. There was also a high degree of symptomatic fever. Adopting the treatment recommended in the former case, I ordered twelve leeches to be immediately applied, which seemed to give temporary relief, but on the pain returning, I took about twelve ounces of blood from the arm. The leeches were afterwards again applied. The treatment in other respects was similar to that adopted in the former case, with the addition of a large blister applied over the abdomen. She died on Friday, the 22nd, being the sixth day after her confinement. Dr. McGowan, and Dr. Tennant, of Falkirk, visited this patient along with me.

Mrs. L—'s mother, who had been in constant attendance upon her during her illness, was seized, on the 30th, with a very severe attack of erysipelas of the face, head, and neck, and, after a dangerous illness, recovered at the end of about three weeks.

The day after Mrs. F—'s funeral, her husband, a stout, robust-looking man, was seized with erysipelas of the face, head, &c. He died in about a week after. This last patient was not attended by me.

Can these two latter cases be attributed to anxiety of mind, constant watching, and want of rest? or are such causes merely to be regarded as exerting a predisposing influence?

After this I declined attending midwifery cases until lately, and I have only had two cases since, in both of which, good recoveries were made.

ON THE

REMOVAL OF OBSTRUCTION OF THE BOWELS IN CHILDREN BY EXTERNAL FRICTION,

WITH OR WITHOUT OLEAGINOUS PURGATIVE SUBSTANCE.

By F. J. BEARDMORE, M.R.C.S.L., Sydney, New South Wales.

CHARLES H—, aged four years, was brought to me on Sunday afternoon, March 12th. Had not had the bowels opened since Saturday morning, and then not effectively. Face flushed; pulse full; breathing quick; great heat of forehead; slight pain in the epigastrium; unusual flatness and contraction of the volume of the intestines. I ordered ten grains of protochloride of mercury, and five grains again at bedtime; a blister on the epigastrium, and a mixture with tartarized antimony, every two hours; salts and senna, with aromatics, next morning.

13th.—Bowels not moved; pulse strong and full; slight delirium. Bled to seven ounces, and placed eight leeches on the temple. Pulse still full; no borborygmi. Ordered two powders, at intervals of two hours each powder, containing three grains of calomel, and two grains of scammony. No effect; injection of warm water; then tinctures of assafoetida, senna, and aloes, then with castor oil. Each remained on the stomach some time, but only brought away shreds of fæces. A small black mark over the centre of the abdomen. On Monday night no signs of the bowels being opened, rubbed them all round the black mark with strong mercurial ointment and croton oil for an hour, and wrapped the body round with flannel.

On Tuesday morning borborygmi was heard, a small quantity of fæces came away, and the bowels, which were of unusually small volume, appeared to swell to a more natural size. I gave a calomel powder, one every hour, continued friction, and on Wednesday morning a good motion took place. The bowels continued sluggish, but the child showed no symptom of weakness, and eventually got quite well without more purging. I had a similar case to treat four years since, and the same mode proved successful. In children the bowels are so near the surface, and the parietes of the abdomen are so thin, that friction might be more generally used with advantage. If we wish to excite contraction of the uterus, we resort to external pressure or friction; why not, then, resort to such a proceeding in severe obstruction of the bowels? The common plan of giving repeated doses of every kind of purgative, in increased doses too, is often fatal, by the violent purging which generally succeeds, and often carries off the young patient. If the obstruction arise from temporary inaction of the muscular fibre, from deficient secretion, where can we look for more simple and effectual means of exciting the peristaltic

action than in friction, even supposing that there were no absorption of the croton and castor oils used? I imagine that in the case narrated there had been great deficiency of bile for some days before I was applied to.

North Shore, Sydney, 1849.

Reviews.

The Misapplication of Anæsthesia in Childbirth, Exemplified by Facts. By G. T. GREAM, one of the Medical Officers of Queen Charlotte's Lying-in Hospital. London: Churchill. pp. 72.

ETHER and chloroform never had a very extensive hold upon London midwifery practice, and the publication of such pamphlets as this must render obstetricians still more shy of anæsthetic agents. Within the past month, three stunning blows have been dealt out against the practice of anæsthesia in natural labour—namely, Dr. Collins's historical memoir of Dr. Joseph Clarke; the re-publication of Dr. Montgomery's address to the Dublin Obstetric Society; and, lastly, Mr. Gream's forcible pamphlet. The latter contains the details of a large number of cases of death after operations and after delivery, where anæsthetic agents were employed, and an inquiry into the results to mother and child in cases where serious symptoms followed their exhibition. Mr. Gream has been blamed, in no measured terms, for endeavouring to find out, by a rigorous inquiry, the bad effects of chloroform, but really its beauties had been so highly painted by its thick-and-thin friends, that some such warning voice from behind the scene was required, and will be received with thanks by the profession. Mr. Gream also enters very fully into the question respecting the production of sexual excitement during labour in cases in which chloroform is employed. After an attentive consideration of the facts he adduces, based on the credible testimony of many most respectable witnesses, there can be no doubt, that in some cases of chloroformization and etherization, sexual feelings are excited even in chaste persons of either sex, and that this sexual excitement is more likely to occur during operations upon the genital, or neighbouring organs, or during labour, and the necessary manipulations of the accoucheur. These facts must be met, not evaded, by the advocates of anæsthesia in natural labour. It is a mere subterfuge and slander to say that in such cases the erotism is excited by the conduct of the medical practitioner.

Medical Societies.

ROYAL MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY:
TUESDAY, MAY 8, 1849.—DR. ADDISON, PRESIDENT.

REMARKS ON THE CAUSES AND MORBID ANATOMY OF MENTAL DISEASES. By JOHN WEBSTER, M.D., F.R.S., &c.

THE author commenced his paper by observing, that having had two of his communications already published in the 26th and 28th volumes of the Society's *Transactions*, on the Statistics and Pathology of Mental Diseases, he presented the present as a further exposition of the subjects then discussed. He then stated, in illustration of the comparative frequency of madness in the two sexes, that out of 1798 lunatics admitted into Bethlem hospital, during six years, ending the 31st of December last, 1094 were females, and only 704 male patients. He next alluded to the causes apparently producing insanity, which he divided into moral and physical, besides hereditary tendency to mental disease. Of the male lunatics, nearly one half, or 346, became mad from moral causes; whilst the proportion of females was not quite so considerable, being 489 of the entire number. By physical causes, less than one fourth of the male lunatics, or 156, became insane; whereas, amongst the female patients, the proportion was rather larger, being 282. Hence, speaking generally, moral causes produced half the total cases; but physical causes only one fourth. The principal moral influence which occasioned insanity amongst males, was reverse of fortune, whereby 86 examples are recorded. Next, anxiety, which furnished 69 instances; then religion, giving 45 cases; lastly, love, which caused the loss of reason