"For purifying the wards of hospitals, or the private apartments of the sick; for deodorization during an autopsy in a private house; for use in dissecting rooms, and for numerous similar purposes, I apprehend the chloric ether lamp will be found convenient, inexpensive and efficacious."

I would remark that the proper material for combustion in the lamp, is the "strong chloric ether" used for inhalation, and not the chloric ether of the pharmacopœia. The latter does not furnish a sufficient quantity of the gas to be efficacious. If the former is not easily attainable, a tincture of chloroform, of the strength of one part of chloroform to six or eight of alcohol, will answer quite as well; in fact, the "strong chloric ether" is nothing more than a tincture of chloroform.

The lamps used for burning camphene are well adapted for this purpose, being provided with a small cap or extinguisher, which covers the wick and prevents evaporation of the ether when not in use. I have made, extemporaneously, a very excellent lamp by inserting two or three inches of glass tubing, of the diameter of a No. 16 bougie, through the cork of a wide-mouthed phial.

Boston, Feb. 5th, 1852.

THE SUFFOLK DISTRICT MEDICAL SOCIETY.

Meeting for Medical Improvement, Jan. 31, 1852.

REPORTED FOR THE JOURNAL BY GEO. STEVENS JONES, M.D.

THIS society, a branch of the Massachusetts Medical Society, holds monthly meetings, having for their object the improvement of its members. At these meetings pathological specimens are exhibited, and the history of the case, together with any peculiarity attending it, is given, and commented upon. Papers relating to some new theory or practice in medicine or surgery, are also read, and the subjects discussed. The members are then individually called upon to make communications relative to anything interesting or novel that has transpired in their practice, or come under their observation, since the last meeting. In this way, much information, which is really practical and useful, *can be drawn out* from the members. Besides, there is a sociability attending these meetings; they bring together a large body of the intelligent and respectable of the profession, and the interchange of sentiment and opinions on various subjects can be, and is, freely made. They are, too, important as the medium of a better acquaintance with each other, thereby removing in a great degree the causes of those petit jealousies which sometimes occur, by estrangement, even in a profession which has ever been regarded as "noble and honorable." These meetings are generally well attended, and a proper spirit is manifested by the members. There would be a more full attendance were the members notified of the day of meeting by a circular sent them. Occurring on the last day of the week and month, as it were the tail end of every thing, it is quite apt to be forgotten. It is a common saying among absent members, "I really forgot all about the Saturday evening meeting; I regret I could not have been there." The only notice which has been given of them, is a gratuitous one in the Journal, which all the members do not see. The expense of notifying them by a printed circular, monthly, would be trifling, and it is presumed that none would object to its being incurred, in view of the benefit which would result from it. It is hoped that some action may be taken in regard to removing this obstacle to a full attendance at these monthly meetings for improvement.

The last meeting was held on Saturday evening, January 31st. There being no communications to be read, or pathological specimens to exhibit, the nature and treatment of erysipelas, one of the subjects of the last meeting, was again

brought up. Dr. EPHRAIM BUCK mentioned two cases of erysipelas of the face. The course which he pursued in the treatment, was opening the bowels with comp. infusion of senna, after which he gave from 20 to 30 drops, in cold water, of the tr. muriate of iron every few hours. In one of the cases he made use of dry wheat flour, dusted over the inflamed surface with a common powder puff; and in the other a saturated tr. of iodine was applied with a camel's-hair brush. He could not say which was the best treatment, nor was he prepared to say that either was decidedly beneficial; but as both did well, they were mentioned to show that light cases did as well under one kind of proper treatment as another. Dr. GEO. STEVENS JONES also mentioned two cases of erysipelas of the face, which were treated by the external application of sulphate of iron, as recommended by M. Velpeau. In one of them he used a solution made by dissolving one ounce of the iron in a pint of soft water. With this solution he kept the parts constantly wet, using linen cloths to retain the moisture. In the other case, he rubbed up two drachms of the iron with an ounce of cerate, with which the parts were kept anointed. He much preferred the latter preparation, as it was more cleanly, could be more readily applied, and, further, he believed that unctuous matter was of itself useful in treating that class of skin disease. His cases did well, and no vesicles formed. Dr. SILAS DURKEE inquired if Dr. Jones thought that the sulphate of iron treatment would prevent vesicles from forming. Dr. J. stated that in his cases there were no vesicles formed; but as he had made use of the application only in the two cases mentioned, he could not tell whether it would generally be successful. Dr. Durkee had used the comp. tr. of iodine in erysipelas, and he thought that it prevented the formation of vesicles. The tincture he used was made by saturating iodine and hydriodate of potassa in alcohol. Dr. E. B. MOORE had used sulphate of iron in the manner spoken of by Dr. Jones, but never with any good result; he much preferred theunction of the ungt. hydrarg. fort. Dr. H. W. WILLIAMS said he was in Paris when M. Velpeau commenced his series of observations on the effects of remedies for erysipelatos inflammations, and those cases which he saw treated at the hospital, by Velpeau, he considered as mere experiments, and not attended with much success. M. Velpeau's method was to anoint half of the face with the iron cerate, while the other half was treated in some other way; as, for instance, tr. of iodine, or sol. nitrate of silver, pencilled over and around the inflamed part. Dr. E. W. BLAKE mentioned the case of a painter who was said to have had an erysipelatos leg, and cured himself in a very short time by *painting it over with white paint*. Dr. JACOB BIGELOW considered erysipelas to differ materially from all other inflammations; that when it was mild and the skin only invaded, it would terminate in resolution without the interference of remedies. External applications might, in most cases, make the patient *feel* more comfortable, but art could not abridge the disease. When the cellular tissue was invaded by this inflammation, destruction of the parts often followed its track. It would burrow among the muscles, and no tissue seemed to be exempt from its ravages. He had known cases which, in 24 hours from their commencement, became gangrenous and sloughy. He had used nitrate of silver, iodine, flour, the preparations of lead, leeching, and in fact all the proposed remedies in such cases, and never was satisfied that they were of any great avail in preventing the invasion of the disease, or did much towards mitigating its virulence. He did not believe the physician could prognosticate, with any degree of certainty, what would be the result of a case of erysipelatos inflammation. He should be pleased to be informed of any means that would control it; but was satisfied, from his own experience, that a specific had not yet been discovered.

Dr. WALTER CHANNING mentioned the case of a lady whom he saw in the eighth month of pregnancy, and who had for the last six months been daily attacked with vomiting soon after taking food. At the time of his visit her pulse was 140, the skin sallow, and she was much emaciated. It was proposed to rupture the membranes and induce premature labor; but she would not give her assent. Nutritive enemata were ordered her, but with little or no hopes that she could live through the full period of gestation. In a few days from his first visit, he saw her again; she then had a blush on her cheeks and nose, resembling in appearance erysipelas. She also had pains simulating labor. A vaginal examination showed

the mouth of the womb to be open, and a bag of waters presenting before the head of the child. Delivery was soon accomplished, but the patient gradually sank, and died. He never knew a patient who had survived, when the vomiting was so severe and protracted as in this case. Medication is of little value, so long as such sympathy exists between the womb, stomach, &c. Inducing premature labor was the only means which would save the patient, and should be resorted to at an early period. Dr. Channing also mentioned a case of convulsions preceding labor, which he saw in consultation with Dr. Homans, the precursory symptoms of which were rather unusual. The lady had a violent headache, and vomited; and heavy and laborious breathing followed. Soon after there seemed to be an *entire suspension of respiration*. "She was still as death itself." The face was not livid, as usual in such cases, but of a sallow white. A physical examination did not reveal any action of the lungs or heart. The muscles of the face would occasionally twitch, being the only symptom of life, and indicating the recurrence of the paroxysmal convulsion. At these times ether and chloroform were applied to the nostrils, which had the effect of suppressing the twitchings, and preventing their frequency. The patient was seen on Saturday morning at 10, and on Sunday evening it was decided to deliver her. Upon examination per vaginam, the os uteri was found to be dilated; there was an effort of the womb to expel its contents, but when this action came on, the convulsive movements also took place. This state of things continued until an opportunity presented to rupture the membranes, which having been done, an immense discharge of waters followed. A dead child was soon expelled, and the patient immediately rallied and did well. Dr. BIGELOW thought the case of much interest, but he very much doubted whether a person could live many minutes without the action of the heart and lungs. It was probable that cases of *apparent* absence of respiration could occur, but in such cases the venous blood is necessarily arterialized, though by what method appears inexplicable.

Dr. SAMUEL PARKMAN exhibited a patient whose foot he had some time previously amputated by "Chopart's process." In this case the tendo-Achillis was divided, which prevented the os calcis from being drawn backwards. The wound, after the operation, became gangrenous, and was treated with burnt wheat flour, which answered a good purpose. This operation was very successful; the patient walked around the room on his *stump*, quite well.

Dr. JOHN WARE, having come in after the call by the president for pathological specimens, now exhibited a false membrane which was coughed up by a little patient six and a half years of age, who had an attack of true membranous croup, and recovered. The treatment pursued in this case, was principally the introduction of a solution of nitrate of silver (40 grains to the ounce) into the laryngeal chamber. The temperature of the room was kept at 70, and the atmosphere moistened by wet cloths hanging around the room. It is now a fortnight since the attack, and the little patient is doing well, and his voice is returning to him. A discussion took place among the members, as to the relative value of the sponge probang, or bulb syringe, in medicating the air passages with solutions; also as to the advantages of the inhalation of powders saturated with the nitrate of silver, or medicated vapors. Dr. BIGELOW had seen much benefit follow the inhalation of the fumes of strong nitric acid in bronchial affections. He was in the habit of letting his phthisical patients use it; and in one or two cases, where there was abundant evidence of tubercles manifested in the lungs, his patients got well. Dr. CHANNING had known the chlorohydric acid to produce the same good effect.

Dr. WARE exhibited a calculus, of the mulberry kind, which was taken from the urethra of a man. This patient had previously suffered with a violent attack, very much resembling colic, and was treated with large doses of opium, by which he was relieved. Soon after, this calculus made its appearance in the urethra, and is supposed to have caused the man's sufferings while in its transit through the ureter. He would inquire if such occurrences were common in the practice of the members. Dr. Z. B. ADAMS had a patient who had three similar attacks of passing stones through the ureters and urethra, occurring within the last 33 years, just eleven years apart. The precursory symptoms were nearly the same as in Dr. Ware's patient. The latter had rheumatism, and he wished to know if any of the gentlemen had ever observed a connection between the

rheumatic and lithic diatheses. Dr. M. S. PERRY had several patients with calculus—some children—yet they were never attacked with rheumatism. Dr. S. BALL mentioned a case of an elderly gentleman, in whose bladder were found, after death, 316 calculi, varying in size from a shot upwards, yet he was ever free from rheumatism. Drs. J. W. STONE and BUCK made mention of cases where patients had calculi come from the bladder, yet were never troubled with rheumatism.

At half past 9 the meeting adjourned.

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, FEBRUARY 11, 1852.

American Medical Society in Paris.—Mention was made in the Journal, some time since, of the formation of an association of American physicians in Paris. The following circular, dated Paris, January 10, 1852, explains one of the objects of the association. We gladly give it insertion, and shall be happy to aid the members in the manner alluded to. We learn that Dr. R. M. Jones, of Lexington, Ky., and Dr. A. J. Semmes, of Georgetown, D. C., are appointed delegates from this society to the American Medical Association, at its ensuing meeting in Richmond.

“At a recent meeting of the American physicians in Paris, an association was established, whose object is the promotion of medical science. This association, essentially national in its character, is now progressing under the most favorable auspices. It is intended to be permanent in its nature, and is designated, “The American Medical Society in Paris.” Notwithstanding the vast advantages afforded by the French metropolis for the study of medical and surgical science, we feel ourselves isolated from our national medical literature, and therefore confidently appeal to the conductors of American journals and periodicals. We do this with the less hesitation, feeling assured that it will be not only a medium of improvement to ourselves, but a means of a most general diffusion and just appreciation of American literature.

By order of the Society, A. J. SEMMES, M.D.
Cor. Sec. A. M. S. in Paris.”

Dr. Parsons's Case of Amputation of the Uterus.—As stated last week, the remarks of Dr. Collins were allowed insertion in the Journal with the most friendly feelings towards Dr. Parsons. Dr. C. claimed a hearing from the profession to state his views concerning the manner in which so important a case had been reported; and in granting what we still think a reasonable request, we did not believe that we should be instrumental in injuring in the least a reputation so well established as that of Dr. Parsons. Our only object now in referring to the matter, is to say, that on reading both communications, there appear many reasons for thinking that Dr. Collins's excellent general remarks are not strictly applicable to the case in question. Probably nine-tenths of the readers of the Journal would have felt no interest in the facts which were withheld by Dr. P.; and whether, therefore, he was morally bound to state them, is a question about which men may well differ without calling in question the candor of the reporter. We have no doubt Dr. P. stated all he considered necessary to a full understanding of the case.