

without success, from the mere misapplication of names, instead of the discoverer using the proper scientific term. How is it that we have so many and such contradictory accounts as to the efficacy of naphtha in phthisis. In many cases, it may have afforded great amelioration, while in other cases, similarly characterized as to stage and progress, it has failed in affording even temporary relief.

Dr. Hastings naturally, when he announced the so-called curability of phthisis by naphtha, induced many able practitioners to try it; and when their reports were neither so satisfactory nor so sanguine as he wished, he looked about for some plausible excuse for the failure, and at last hit upon the fact of there being many kinds of naphtha in the market, alleging the use of a wrong article in the failures.

But why has Dr. Hastings confounded names?—why applied the term “naphtha” to a substance which has nothing to do with it—viz., acetone? True it is, that acetone sometimes occurs mixed up with naphtha, but only as an impurity. The term, pyroacetic spirit, or naphtha, is only applied by chemists to the hydrate of the oxide of methule, $C_2 H_3 O$, aq. The formula for acetone is $C_3 H_6 O$.

Certainly, he mentions a means of preparing the substance he intends to be used; but why fly in the face of chemistry, and call it naphtha?

Practitioners have taken for granted that any substance which goes by the name of pyroacetic spirit was to be used. Curiously enough, for once, it was better to use an impure substance than a pure one. Those men whose druggists have supplied them with an impure mixture (wood spirit, pyroacetic spirit) may have succeeded, because of the large quantity of acetone which is mixed up with it, whilst others, whose druggists were honest men, failed, because they used a pure article containing not a trace of acetone.

The tests he gives for the article he intended to be used are no criterion. Hydrate of the oxide of methule, and acetone, are both, when pure, miscible with water, without the production of milkiness; both are neutral to test paper; and both effervesce with pure nitric acid, without change of colour of the solution itself, although the products of the decomposition are very different, those of the decomposition of acetone being a series of new compounds, while those of the decomposition of the hydrate of the oxide of methule are water and oxalic acid.

The tests for the two substances which appear to be the most worthy of reliance seems to be the taste, which certainly is very different, that of acetone being pungent, very much like peppermint, and really not very disagreeable; while hydrate of the oxide of methule has a very nauseous, biting taste. Their reaction, also, with chloride of calcium is very characteristic: hydrate of oxide of methule, mixed with it, forms a definite compound? $(Me O, aq.) + Ca Cl$, in beautiful crystals. So powerful, indeed, is the attraction of the two substances, that the temperature of the solution rises considerably during the formation: acetone forms no such compound.

Some practitioners may, perhaps, think that there is really not so much difference between the formula of the two substances; but if they be not satisfied with the difference in action shown by the reaction mentioned above, I would remind them that there is as much difference, or even more, than there is between many substances whose actions upon the animal economy are much more marked. Look, for instance, at the formula for atropia:— $C_{34} N H_{23} O_6$ —and piperine, $C_{34} N H_{19} O_6$ —or between turpentine, $C_{20} H_{16}$ and camphor, $C_{20} H_{16} O_2$; to say nothing of the chloride and bichloride of mercury.

My object, in these remarks, is to call attention to a serious and frequent cause of disappointment, the effect of inadvertency caused by indifference to the new facts revealed by chemical science.

Terrace, Gravesend, June, 1846.

NEURALGIA OF THE UTERUS ARISING FROM DENTITION.

By R. DAVIS, Esq., M.R.C.S., London.

MRS. S—, of Shoreditch, a lady of full habit, florid complexion, stout make, and twenty-five years of age, was delivered of a male child on the 3rd of September, 1844. The labour was one of some difficulty, it being a breech presentation, and it was, after the expulsion of the child, attended with considerable hæmorrhage. It is curious here to observe, that out of the five children of which this lady has been delivered, four were breech presentations. There was adhesion of the placenta, which required the introduction of the hand

into the womb to effect its removal. With the exception of some fainting, and a few after-pains, everything went on favourably until the sixth day after delivery, when she was attacked with pain of a severe character in the region of the uterus. There was no fever; no heat of skin; no derangement of the circulating or digestive systems, and no increase of pain upon pressing the abdomen. For the relief of this pain, opiates and other sedatives were freely administered, both in a solid and liquid form, without benefit. We may here observe, that although the pain was of a most severe character, it was intermittent in its attacks, and during the intermissions, pain was referred to face, but not considered of such consequence by the patient as to inform me of the circumstance. The pain of the abdomen continuing, and fearing that this irritation might terminate in inflammation, leeches, fomentations, mustard plasters, bran poultices, and blisters, were applied freely, and a pill, consisting of one grain of opium, and two of calomel, was administered every three hours. The pain in the face now became more severe, and the patient, supposing it to arise from toothach, surrounded the parts with flannel. This circumstance led to inquiries on my part, which ended in an examination of the mouth, when I found the posterior part of the gum enlarged, red, and swollen. The mystery was explained. One of the dentes sapientiæ, the cause of all the pain in the uterus, was coming up; the gum was freely lanced, and the pain in the uterus from that moment subsided. No more medicine was required nor given.

I have condensed this case as much as possible, and in the hope that it may prove of some practical value to the profession, I send it for publication without further remark. I need scarcely observe, that all collateral treatment, independent of that mentioned in this letter, was attended to in the management of this case.

Worship-square, Finsbury, May, 1846.

STATE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

ADDRESS TO THE SURGICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND AT THE CLOSE OF THE SESSION 1845-6.

By R. CARMICHAEL, Esq., M.R.I.A., &c., Dublin.

THE PRESIDENT, after having read over the minutes of the Society during the session, and made many appropriate comments on the communications which had reached it, addressed his audience thus:—

“Having now made this imperfect sketch of your very important proceedings during this session, permit me to express the high opinion I entertain of the professional talents and acquirements of the members of this Society, as have been evinced in the various communications to which I have just adverted.

“Never having attended your meetings until this session, as President of the College, I had a very inadequate notion of the depth and extent of information to be obtained, not only from your written Transactions, but from the research, clash of intellect, and astuteness of mind which the discussions upon each subject occasioned; and permit me also to express the pleasure I experienced in observing, that however different and opposite the views might be amongst you on the subject under discussion, the debates were conducted in a spirit of the most perfect amenity, good feeling, and gentlemanlike demeanour, evincing that the great object in view was the ascertainment of truth.

“The construction or arrangement of this Society is excellent; for while those qualified to practise the medical profession alone join in debate, the juniors on the cross-benches, although silent, are not debarred from the information to be gathered at your meetings.

“Gentlemen, while listening with pleasure and advantage to your communications and discussions, I could not but feel deep regret that the public were not sufficiently aware of the acquirements and practical information of the regularly-educated medical men of this city; and that instead of placing their confidence entirely upon them, they should so frequently bestow it upon others in every respect their inferiors. But I have no doubt that ere long the intelligent portion of society will perceive the folly and absurdity of trusting their health and lives to those who are in no way qualified for so important a trust.

“The medical profession in Great Britain is at present peculiarly and most unhappily circumstanced. It has been