

("Traité Complet, &c.," tome ii., p. 413.) thus mentions it:—"La dilatation au moyen d'un morceau d'éponge, comme l'a imaginé M. Kluge, est d'un effet beaucoup plus certain. L'irritation qu'en résulte est permanente, progressive, régulière, et soutenue par la pression qu'exerce l'espèce de tampon qu'on maintient en même temps dans le vagin. Sous l'influence d'une pareille excitation, la matrice entre bientôt en action, et il est difficile que le travail n'acquière pas rapidement un energie suffisante."

ON THE INSTANT TREATMENT OF CHOKING, AND OF ASPHYXIA.

BY PHILAETHES.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—In my former communications, pp. 104, 135, I forgot to caution the operator, in his attempt to produce artificial œsophageal, or, rather, pharyngeal vomiting, in the case of choking, to seize the little patient and place him between his knees sideways; and in this, or some other manner, to compress the abdomen, otherwise the power of the blow will be lost by the yielding of the abdominal parietes, and the respiratory effort will not be produced.

In the present communication, I wish to call your reader's attention to the treatment of *asphyxia*. I shall suppose the case to occur at a distance from any station of the Royal Humane Society, and, indeed, from any efficient aid whatever. Let it be that of a skater taken out of the water. The first thing to be done is, to induce respiration. Let two persons of muscular power make tourniquets, as it were, of their handkerchiefs, across the thorax and across the abdomen, and let both use their strength at the same instant to produce expiration; let them relax their tourniquets suddenly, and at the same instant, so as to allow the force of the elasticity of the ribs, and of the weight of the abdominal viscera, to act in inducing inspiration. Let these efforts be repeated. Meanwhile, let the wet clothes of the patient be cut off, and let a bed and cover be prepared with those of the bystanders, each sparing what his heart may prompt.

Now, let the active, not the busy, set to, and try what frictions with their warm hands may do, in restoring warmth and promoting the circulation, rubbing firmly and briskly from the extreme parts upwards towards the heart. All on a sudden let cold water be dashed on the face and abdomen, to effect, if possible, an excited act of inspiration, and then let the rubbing be again pursued with energy. With the same view and hope, the nostrils and the fauces should be irritated, for sneezing and vomiting are alike preceded by an act of inspiration.

If these measures have failed, inspiration must now be attempted by the force of the

expiratory muscles of another person, placing his own mouth on that of the patient, whilst closing the nostrils of the latter. Such are the means which are always in readiness, and which the unprofessional person may use. The rest will be suggested by professional knowledge and skill; and it is not my present object to dilate on this subject.

I need scarcely say, that what I have stated seems to constitute the first remedies in cases of congenital asphyxia, and of suspended animation from hanging, the vapour of burning charcoal, &c. In these cases the full, fresh air should be allowed to fall on the patient's face; and, indeed, this is true of the cases of drowning, and, therefore, the crowd of the busy and useless should be dispersed, and the real helpers alone retained near the scene of action.

I may also suggest that, in the first use of the tourniquets, the patient should be placed on the face, so that any fluid or mucus in the mouth may escape, and not be drawn into the larynx or trachea.

If, Sir, I may judge from all I have heard, your readers will not regret the little space occupied in your pages by this short note. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

PHILAETHES.

Oct. 20, 1840.

P.S.—Mr. Read is usefully employed in devising instruments for the purpose of effecting artificial respiration. One of his designs is, that of drawing the respired air out of the cavity of the bronchia and trachea. This he effects by means of a syringe applied to the mouth, the nostrils being closed. The principle of this is the admitting the external atmosphere to press upon the chest and abdomen, by removing its pressure from within. Whether this plan be more efficacious than that of the tourniquet remains to be proved.

CARBONIC ACID GAS, AS A REMEDIAL AGENT.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—In your report of the proceedings of the London Medical Society on Monday, October 5th, there is a mistake as to my remarks on the subject of the action of carbonic acid gas on the organs of generation in females, I merely threw out the suggestion, that knowing the effects of undiluted oxygen and of undiluted carbonic acid gases, when taken into the lungs, upon the blood and system generally, was it not probable that carbonic acid gas, when applied to the mucous membrane of the vagina and uterus, might have an effect upon the blood contained at the time in the capillary vessels, which would help to account for its local effects on these parts? I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM SIMPSON.

110, Guilford-street, Oct. 10, 1840.