

a hydrocele. The boy was seven years of age, and of a delicate and scrofulous constitution. The hydrocele could be attributed to no cause. The tunica vaginalis and scrotum were distended to the size of a hen's egg. With a view of promoting absorption of the contained fluid before tapping the hydrocele, I directed a portion of the *Ungt. Hydr. Fort.* to be rubbed on it two or three times a day, but as the ointment caused a good deal of cuticular excitement and irritation, without apparently proving beneficial, it was soon left off.

On the 11th of the same month, finding that no beneficial result had been obtained from the previous plan of treatment, I ordered a drachm of the *Ungt. Hydriodat. Potassæ* to be rubbed in three times a day, and a dose of four grains of the *Submur. Hydr.* to be given. This treatment was continued more or less regularly until the 20th, without producing any change in the hydrocele, in consequence of which I determined on resorting to puncture, and accordingly opened the hydrocele with a common lancet, after which the sac was completely emptied of its fluid contents. My learned and talented friend, Dr. Barnes, of Carlisle, having seen the case the day previous, advised me to make use of the red-port injection &c. after tapping the hydrocele, but thinking this to be a very favourable opportunity of testing the effects of the local application of the hydriodas potassæ, I resolved to give it a fair trial. Accordingly, I waited until the hydrocele had acquired about half its original size, when I directed a drachm of the ointment of the hydriodate, in the proportion of 3j to an ounce of lard, to be rubbed in three times a day. The ointment was first applied in this case on the 8th of November, and half the quantity more was repeated on the 22nd, which, together with the puncturing, has effected a complete and radical cure, as the boy was soon free from all complaint, and has continued so up to the present moment.

MERCURIAL FRICTIONS IN MALIGNANT CHOLERA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In THE LANCET of the 25th ult. there appears a Memoir on the Cholera of Marseilles, and the use of mercurial frictions, starch enemata, &c., with the following observation:—"Seventeen cases are given; in all the success was constant, but we are unable to ascertain whether M. Robert treated any other cases in the

same manner with different success, or whether, in fact, he cured all the persons who fell under his care," &c. "We find ourselves compelled to suspend any judgment upon the remedy he advocates, until we know in a more precise manner the relation of the deaths, or the cures, to the whole number treated." We should not omit to mention that salivation never followed in any case, although the strong mercurial ointment rubbed in sometimes amounted to several ounces."

As your Journal circulates through a society of medical practitioners here, I did not get sight of this Number until last night; and I take the liberty of presenting to you a copy of a thesis upon the subject in question, by which you will see the reported success of the mercurial treatment by inunction, borne out by ample and satisfactory experience. Should you deem this testimony and the subject itself worth a place in your Journal, it is at your service; and as this periodical is so extensively read, it may possibly reach the eye of the Marseilles practitioner, and gratify him by the knowledge that his mode of treatment has found similar success in this country. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

H. H. PARKIN.

Royal Marine Infirmary, Woolwich,
Aug. 18, 1835.

CEREBRAL DEVELOPMENT

INOPERATIVE ON THE

SEX OF THE FŒTUS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—There appeared in THE LANCET a week or two since a few observations on this very important and little understood physiological subject, but there are two or three facts which seem to have escaped the notice of "Philoneuron," to which I would solicit his attention.

The theory which your correspondent has advanced is, "that the distinction of sex in the human family is originally made by the greater or less deposition of cerebral matter in the embryo;" and the only argument which he has adduced, is the late period of the foetal existence in which the determination of the future sex occurs—regarding the views of that class of physiologists as correct, who contend that the *primitive* sex of every foetus is female, and that the male organs of generation are merely the greater evolution or development of the female organs; "also we