

ed by it. The sulphate of iron is obtained from eight ounces of iron filings, fourteen ounces of sulphuric acid, and four pints of water; after the sulphuric acid has been mixed with the water, the iron is added, and heat applied, and when the bubbles have ceased to escape the liquor is strained, and set aside, until crystals are formed; the liquor that is poured off is evaporated, that crystals may be obtained, and they are all dried. The dilution of the acid with water is necessary, for concentrated sulphuric acid does not act upon the iron; the oxygen of the water unites with iron, to form an oxide, whilst the hydrogen passes off in the form of gas. The sulphuric acid dissolves the oxide of iron that has been formed, and the resulting compound is sulphate of iron. The crystals are, at first, of a bluish-green colour, but by exposure to the air they become green. They have a styptic taste, are soluble in about two parts of cold water, and three-fourths of their weight of boiling water. Care should be taken that they are not kept in badly-stopped bottles, for a yellow deposit, insoluble in water, is formed on their surface. As they decompose the alkalies, ammonia, potash, soda, and their carbonates, it should not be prescribed with them, nor are they to be united with acetate of lead, nor with nitrate of silver, though it has been ordered in solution with them, in some of the formulæ for injections into the vagina.

the side of the pelvis. It was our opinion that the only means of effectually preventing the descent of the hernia, would be by adapting a springed instrument, which would pass on the internal opening, that had permitted the descent of the tumour.

Subsequently to this consultation Mrs. B—— was, from exposure to cold, seized with peritonitis, which, although it yielded to the usual means, yet considerable uneasiness remained in the region of the rectum. Leeches, anodyne enemata, hip-bath, calomel, and antimonials, were employed with but temporary alleviation of her sufferings. After ten days of the most excruciating distress, increased to the greatest intensity when at stool, I discovered, by introducing one index-finger into the vagina, the other into the rectum, that a considerable tumour occupied the interval between the former and the latter, which conveyed a pretty decided feeling of fluctuation; pain greatly aggravated by the pressure of my fingers. The suffering and difficulty experienced during defecation were now readily accounted for. I subsequently introduced the largest sized bougie into the uterus, with great ease, as the os uteri was so patulous that it would admit the point of the finger. This tumour was quite unconnected with the hernia before-mentioned.

Mrs. B—— was now again seen by Mr. Colles, who agreed with me in opinion, as to the existence of an abscess between the rectum and vagina. This poor lady besought us to perform any operation that would relieve her from her present agonising sufferings.

We determined upon introducing the exploratory needle into the tumour from the vagina; unequivocal evidence of matter was afforded by this means. I next introduced a lancet, conveyed upon my index-finger, through the posterior wall of the vagina into the tumour; but, to our no small surprise and disappointment, the saucer was removed from the os externum without being soiled with discharge. On visiting my patient next morning, I was informed that her sufferings during the preceding night were just as severe as ever. I now introduced a long and large-sized probe into the opening that had been made by the lancet; but still pus did not flow, although this instrument, on removal, was smeared with matter. Conceiving that the contents of the abscess were obstructed by the interposition of the parts in a valvular-like way, I determined upon using a trocar and canula in the ring. When I called upon Mrs. B——, I learned that in about an hour after I had introduced the probe, on rising to pass water, nearly a pint of well-formed pus was discharged, at once, through the vagina, to the no small relief of my patient. Matter continued to flow, for upwards of ten days, from the abscess. Hectic symptoms now

RARE CASE OF PERINEAL HERNIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Should you consider the inclosed case, so unique in its nature and treatment, deserving of a place in your valuable and widely-circulated Journal, I shall feel obliged by its insertion. I am, &c. &c.

G. T. HAYDEN, M.R.C.S.I.

Lecturer on Anatomy and Surgery,
Original School of Medicine,
Peter-street, Dublin.

Dublin, Oct. 23, 1837.

Mrs. B——, ætat. 32, generally healthy, pelvis wide, was safely delivered of her third child, on the 2nd of February, 1837. Labour in all respects natural. A small, soft tumour was perceived at this time, in the vagina, which, from its figure and position, was then supposed to be a polypus.

Six weeks after confinement, in consultation with Messrs. Colles and Wilmot, it was pronounced that the tumour was not a polypus, but a hernia, descending between the rectum and vagina, upon the *right side*, of the size and figure of a small pear, reducible after long-continued pressure; the aperture through which it passed feeling hard, defined, slitlike, and immediately contiguous to

set in, which were removed by country air and tonics.

In less than three months this lady was restored to her usual good health. Some fullness and hardness remained on the site of the abscess. Menstruation as regular as ever. I shall now return to the original affection. The hernia had increased in size.

I found considerable difficulty in conveying an idea of the instrument required for its support to our instrument-makers. At length I applied to my friend Mr. L'Estrange, whose ingenuity and mechanical genius are too well known to the profession and the public to need any tribute of praise at my hands. This gentleman most obligingly visited my patient, and undertook the task. Under his superintendence an instrument, on the principle of a truss, has been constructed, which completely keeps the hernia *reduced*, without producing any marked uneasiness by its pressure. This ingenious instrument consists of a concave piece of tin, padded, and adapted to the right hip, between the anterior and spinous process of ilium and great trochanter. A girth passes from this around the back, and corresponding part of the left hip, which is fastened with buckles to the other extremity, so as to steady the padded tin. Fixed to the latter is a spring, covered with leather, and oiled silk, which passes downwards and inwards to the vulva. The internal extremity is attached, by a screw, to a shank of wood; the latter is adapted to a globular piece of the same substance, like a pessary, which presses directly upon the opening through which the hernia had descended, and in a direction upwards, backwards and outwards.

COLCHICUM IN CASES OF SCARLATINA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—As scarlatina has reappeared in this city, I have been induced to bring before your readers a notice of a remedy, which, so far as I am aware, has never before been tried in *that* disease; and I do so with the greater confidence in having been partly anticipated in my observations by Dr. Lewins, of Leith. The observations of that gentleman on the use of colchicum, although more particularly applicable to *continued* fever, very much agree with those I had made in scarlet fever, without any knowledge of his experiments.

From 20th July, 1836, to 25th May, 1837, I had an opportunity, in a country district where I then resided, of seeing and prescribing for 126 cases of scarlatina, of which number only one died. That my success

was, in a great measure owing to the use of the colchicum, is evident from the fact, that, in the same district, during the same epidemic, and in the same class of patients, but under a different mode of treatment, one out of five or six of all who were affected, died.* It is far from my intention to make an invidious distinction between my own success in the treatment of that disease and that of my brother practitioners, believing, as I do, that the ordinary measures, were, in most cases, early and skilfully applied. But as it is impossible, without a comparative view, to show the advantage of one mode of treatment over another, I have reluctantly availed myself of the above fact. As I intend, at some future period, to present these observations in a more extended form, detailing in full, some of the cases in which the effects of the medicine were most apparent, I shall only trouble you, in the meantime, with the following summary, in order to show the grounds on which my opinion of the efficacy of the colchicum was founded.

As scarlet fever presents itself in different forms, one case differing from another in severity, so it may naturally be presumed that it is not expedient to follow the same mode of treatment in every case; and accordingly colchicum ought not to be administered in all cases indiscriminately. I administered it only to thirty-five patients, being little more than one-fourth of those for which I prescribed, but these, of course, were of the worst description, being all of the pure inflammatory type. In the most of these, bloodletting, both general and local, was had recourse to; in others local bleeding only; and I may here remark, that the effects of the colchicum were always most apparent after detraction of blood; but in all, the following changes were more or less manifested in a short time after its administration. The pulse was diminished in frequency and force; the palpitation of the heart, which in young subjects was often perceptible to the eye, subsided; the inflammation and pain of the throat were alleviated; and the patient often expressed himself "much better." Vomiting was excited in a few cases; but as this seemed always to be followed by an improvement in the state of the tonsils, and generally abated

* It is impossible to give the average of deaths *exactly*, as I was not so intimate with one of the practitioners as to know the number of cases which he had under his charge, but I do not think that it would exceed thirty, as his practice was very limited, and I know that he had, at least, five deaths. The other medical gentleman of the place told me, himself, that, as near as he could *guess*, he had attended fifty patients, and of these I know, from direct information, that he lost at least twelve.